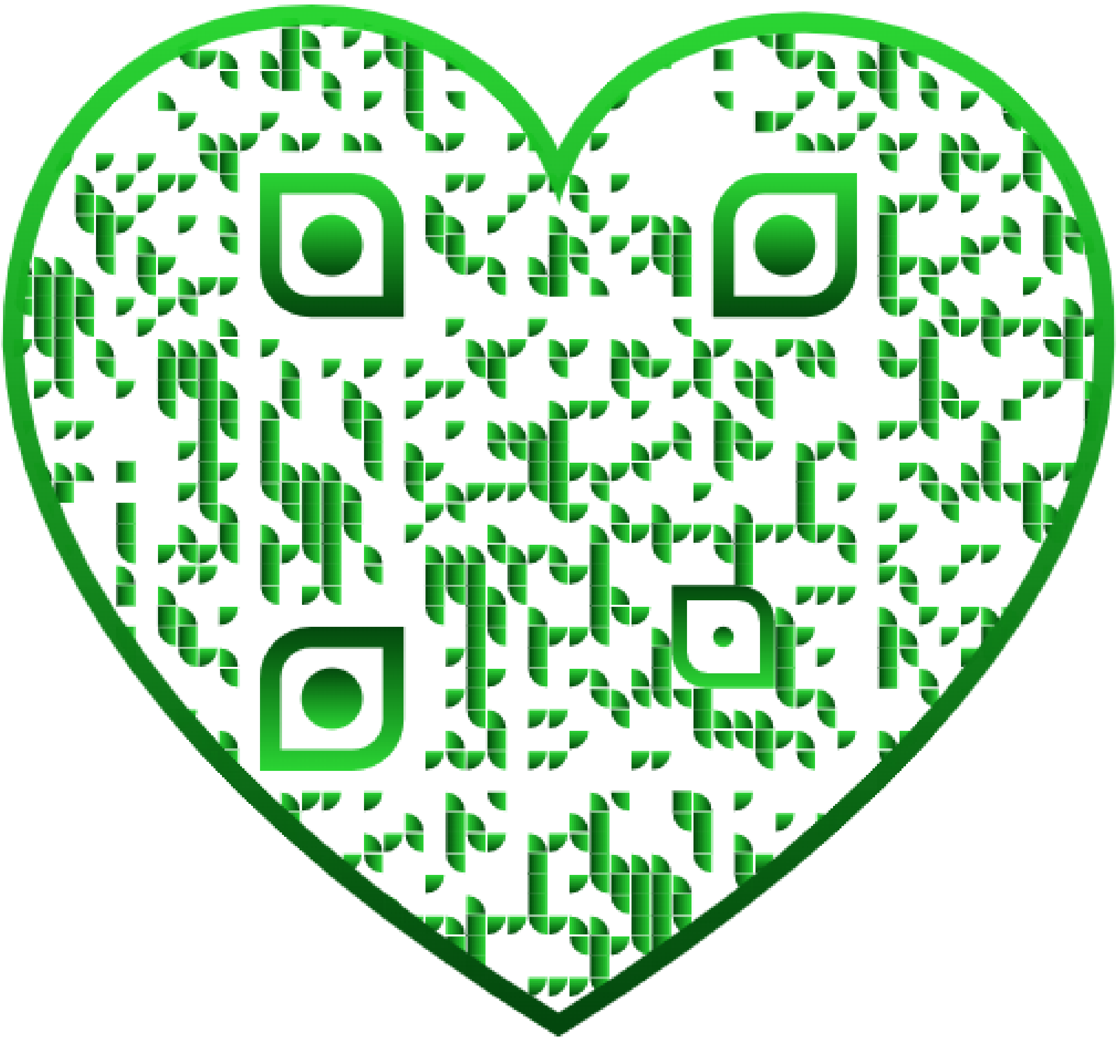
BEACH & BAYSIDE homes



EDITOR'S NOTES

When asked what attracts us to the coastline, the responses from the architects we interviewed for this publication were as varied as their design concepts – therapeutic, calming, cooling, dynamic, engaging, energising, restorative, soulfood. The curative properties of the coastal environment on physical and emotional wellbeing are well documented. Access to the coastline for Australians is fundamental. A seaside jaunt satisfies a close connection to nature and the prospect of sand, salt and surf balances adventure with simplicity. We crave more. Building in this landscape presents challenges and design solutions draw on materials that are robust and environmentally appropriate. Briefs vary in budget and intent, and then there's taste. A huge thanks to the architects for their informative chats, the photographers for supporting them, and the opportunity to showcase this collection of diverse and impressive talent. ✦

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BEACH &
BAYSIDE
homes

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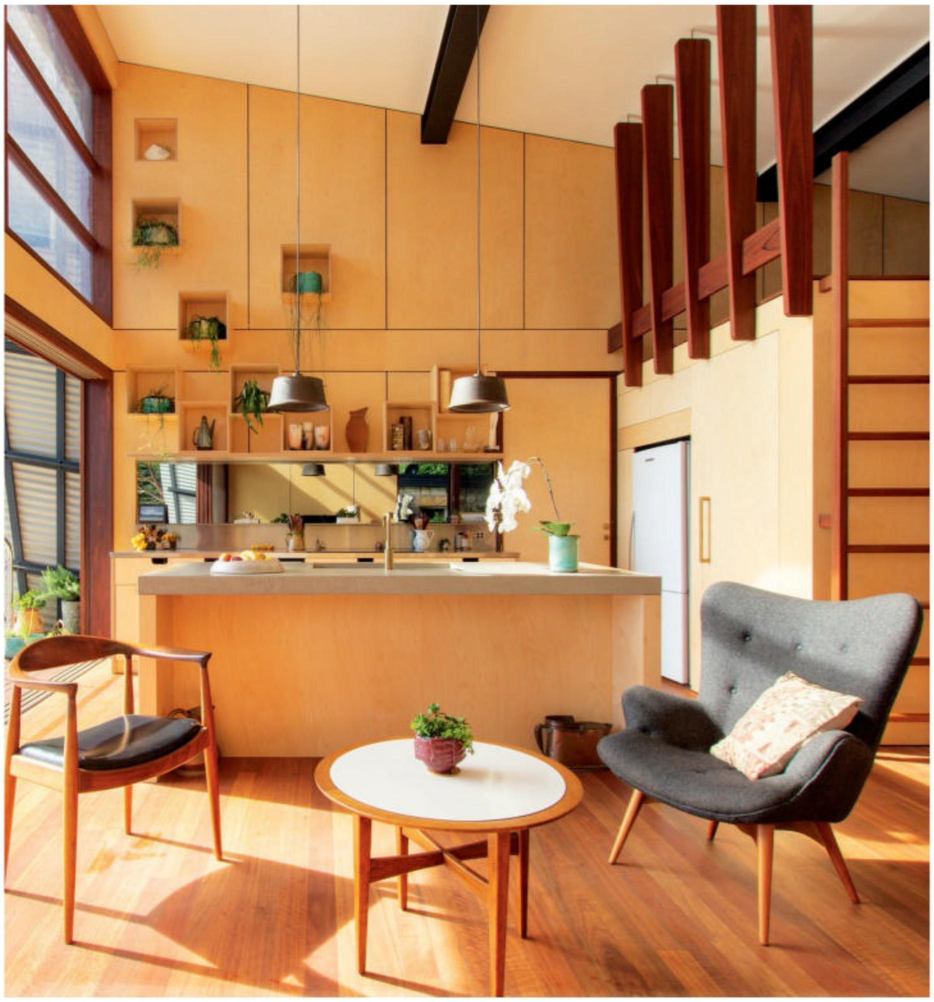
HART HOUSE

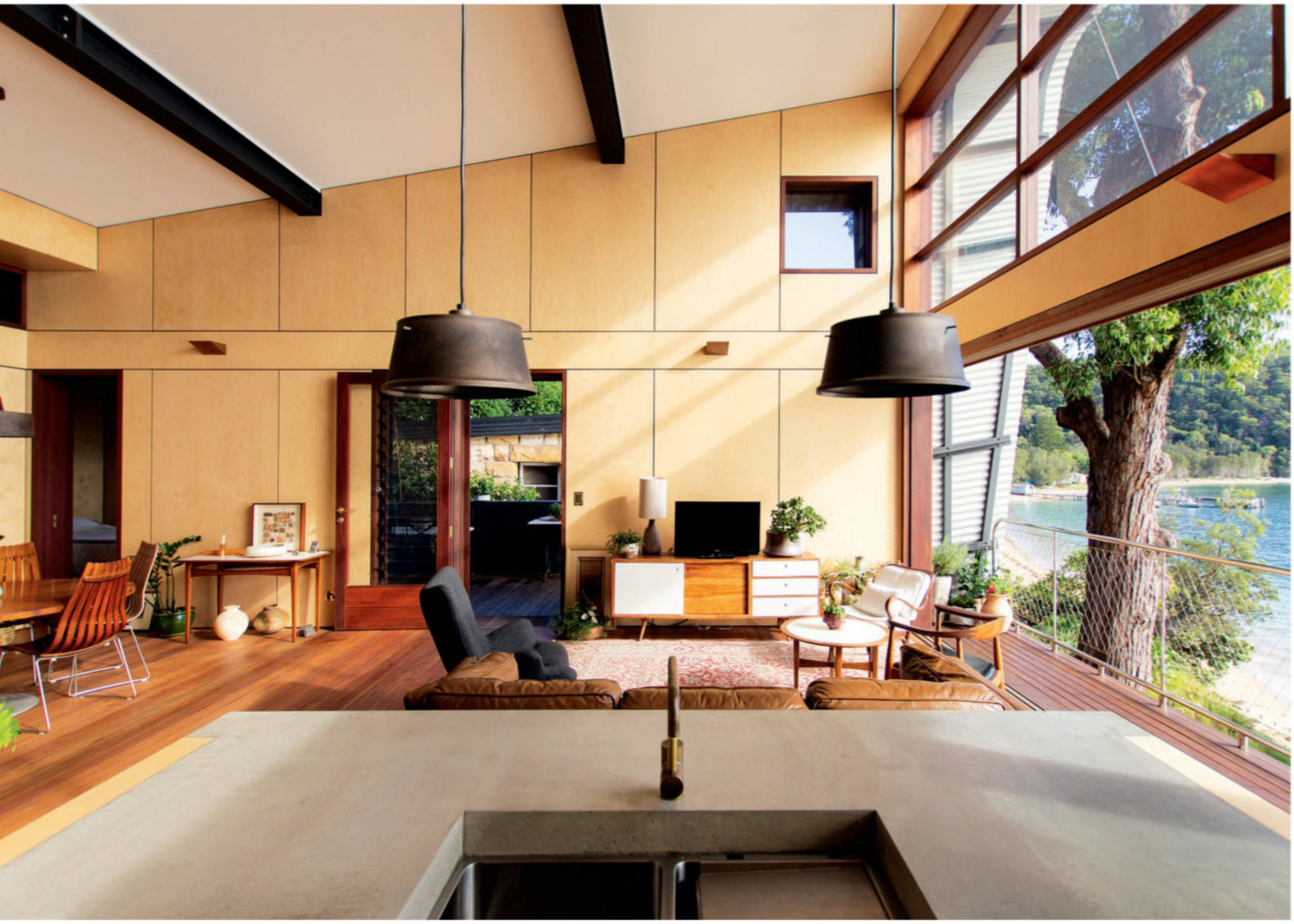
A small footprint with a grand perspective is a tribute to the less is more principle.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Rhys Holland



On Great Mackerel Beach, north of Sydney, there's a build that resembles a shell. With its back to the Ku-ring-gai National Park, a metal exterior protectively wraps the contents. In place of a mollusc appearing at the opening, what emerges through a glass lens is an expansive view. Designed by Rob Brown of Casey Brown Architects who has lived 'four or five' houses along for the past twenty years, Hart House was the chance for a local experiment. "It's a little settlement from the 1930s that's sort of remained in a time capsule, no roads, only boat access, limited development, a beautiful sandy beach facing northwest and bush surrounding the whole place. It's pretty special," he says in situ.

This familiarity with the environment informed Rob's design concept. The weather's moods, the onset of cold winds, the patterns of the rising sun, and everyday access constraints. A rear cliff face of National Park provided shelter from southern winds, and the northeast aspect opened to a panorama reaching Palm Beach and the Barrenjoey Headland. The brief from the clients was uncomplicated, "They didn't want a big house, which was great because the site then allowed us to make a big house in the sense of a big view," explains Rob. A spatial understanding was applied to the small footprint to facilitate height and a grand perspective. The design featured double height windows spanning one combined living and dining space, with a small bedroom and bathroom tucked underneath.

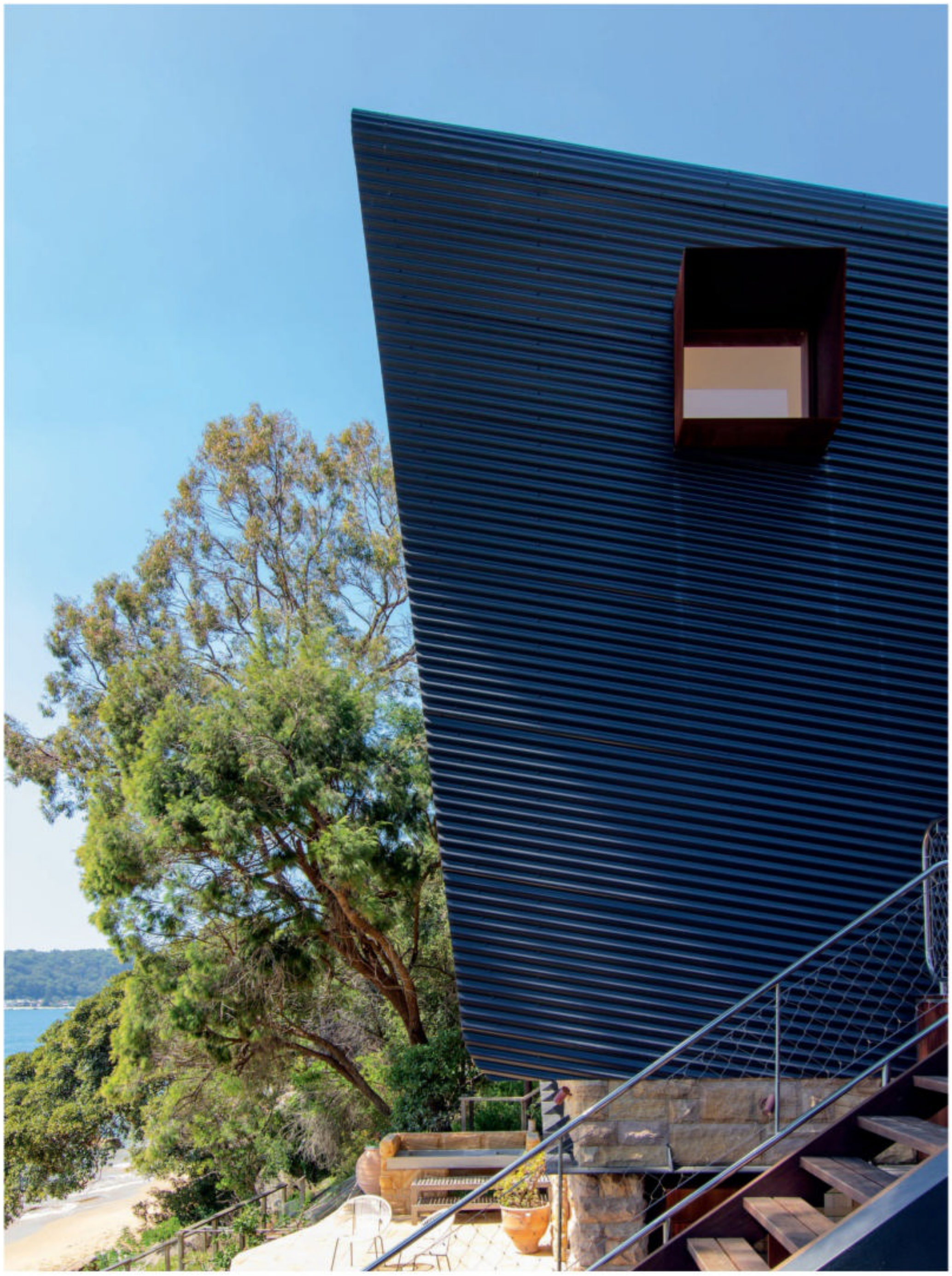


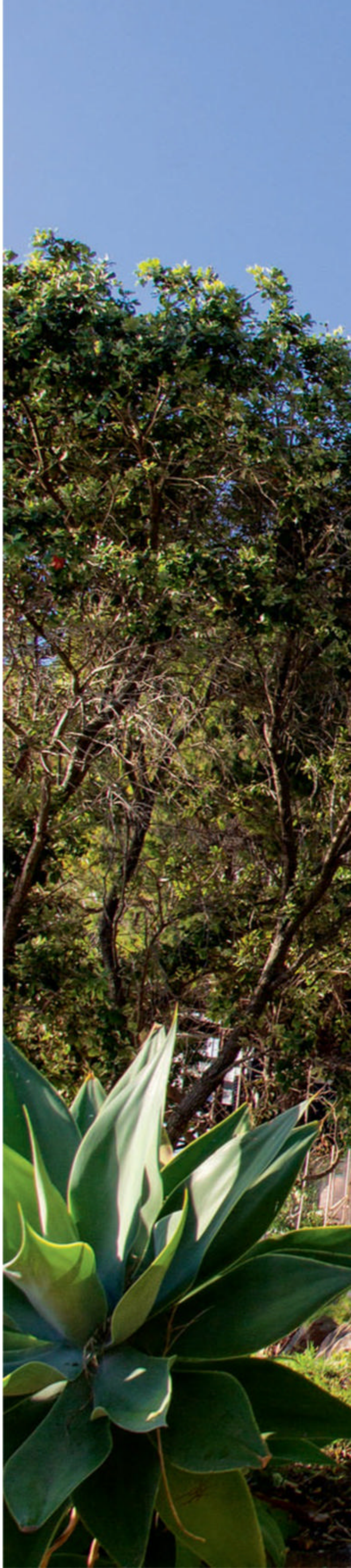
The builder was young but came with credentials as foreman on a Glenn Murcutt project in Palm Beach which Rob declares, "a brilliant house." There was no hesitation in his appointment and the clients also bestowed their complete confidence. Building conditions were demanding and required considerable negotiation due to access and slope. Each day the builder travelled to the site by barge and arranged the ferrying of materials across the Pittwater. He had to be acutely organised to avoid a long boat trip back if he'd forgotten anything. There was no big machinery onsite, so the builders worked entirely by hand. Rob recalls, "At certain stages they devised these sorts of Egyptian slides where big pieces of steel had to be slid up and pulled up the hill into position and incredibly useful, strong guys would lift the steel beams up and put them into place." The team had to be at Palm Beach wharf at first light for the early ferry and were stuck onsite until knock off. There was no nipping away for a takeaway lunch or an early mark. Their efforts were significant relative to the ease of a flat site and Rob attests to their fantastic accomplishment in the remote location.

In terms of materials, BAL (Bushfire Attack Level) requirements predicated the folded corrugated iron wrapping which protects the building from bushfire. The shape of the metal shell facilitates water capture, and the upwards angle conceals rooftop photovoltaic panels from view. Clean lines are also a response to bushfire protection, removing places for embers to catch. A steel frame forms the skeleton for the dark corrugated cladding, the colour chosen to recess the building into the hillside. Internally the colour palette is minimal with warm timber tones that add a glowing richness. Hoop pine plywood on the walls and spotted gum on the floor reinforce the beauty of the natural surrounds and amplify the panorama's showstopping credential.

With no internal stairs, the bedroom and bathroom are accessed externally - a design feature Rob has repeated in other beach houses. He believes running up and down a set of outdoor steps enhances engagement with nature and the elements. It's a feature that suits a small footprint. He explains, "It's a very different experience to living in a house in the suburbs."

During the building process Hart House became a permanent residence, and the client worked as site labourer. He witnessed first-hand the skill involved in construction, affirmed by an appreciation





of the home's ability to cool in summer and warm in winter. His other job involved donning more formal attire, paddling his SUP (stand-up paddleboard) out to his boat without mishap, and ferrying himself to work in Mona Vale. Both the reclusive setting and the immediacy of the water offer rewarding prospects for the clients.

Completed in 2019, the success of Hart House is validated by all the positive comments. Having now achieved three builds at Great Mackerel Beach, Rob has unwittingly assumed the status of 'architect in residence'. "I think the most important thing is that sense of clients' satisfaction. It's good to know all the things like the shell wrap, the glass façade, and the use of plywood work to create a combination of a great space, a robust building. It's clearly different from all the other buildings on the beach," he admits. ✦

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THE POINT

Refinement is achieved without complexity in an outcome that doesn´t engulf the landscape.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** Adam Gibson and Stu Gibson

Resting on a clifftop overlooking Frederick Henry Bay on the South Arm peninsula in south-eastern Tasmania, the aptly named The Point is like a contemporary re-imagining of an ancient rock shelter.

With a history that spans thousands of years of habitation by the Nuenone indigenous people of the area and in more recent times colonial farmers, the 20-hectare site is rugged, raw and barren. Fully exposed to the elements, its vista overlooks a well-known surf break and spans all the way out to the wild Southern Ocean.

Architect, Stuart Tanner, recalls his first visit and how taken he was by the scene before him. "The Tasmanian light is very significant – it's sharp, it's clear, it's penetrating and always changing," he says. "I remember standing in that paddock in this huge landscape, watching the light striking the ocean. It's breathtaking."

As such, he knew that context was to be of paramount importance in the design process. This meant respecting and staying loyal to the landscape, the climate, the history of the area, and the way the house sits not only on the land but how it presents from the sea as well. A surfer himself, Stuart wanted to create a building that didn't interrupt the locale. "I was mindful of introducing something that tucks subtly into the contour and not doing too much."

In its simplest iteration, Stuart wanted the house to act as shelter and have prospect – much like a rock cave. Designing a low-lying rectangular form with floor-to-ceiling glazing meant that wherever you are in the house the natural world comes to the fore.

"What interested me was a building that restrained itself, that had a humility about it, that didn't go much further than simply underscoring the landscape," he says. "As soon as you place architecture in such a landscape, it's engulfed by it. It's about trying to pull back and place a simple plan form, and concentrate on detail, junction and beautiful materials."

The result is a peaceful, dramatic and bold piece of architecture – much like its environment – which uses a mixture of industrial and earthy materials that are robust, resilient and tactile: raw concrete walls, honed concrete floors, a steel structure, black ply ceilings, outdoor weathered wharf timbers, boulders and crushed Bluestone.

The interior finishes were selected by Tanner Architects, in close consultation with the client to be sombre and neutral so as not to detract from the landscape and climatic drama happening outside. The client's interior designer daughter selected the furniture.

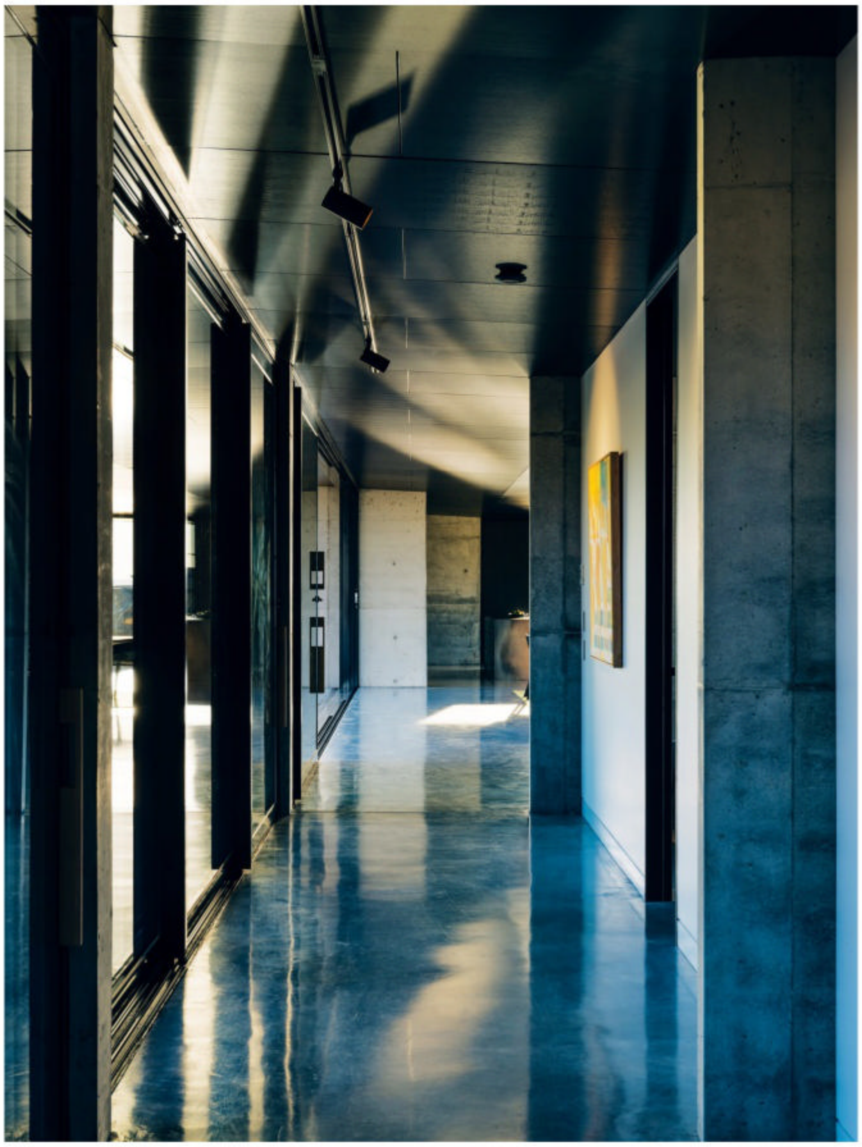
One of the challenges was the site's semi-remote location and "achieving refinement without complexity". A semi-modular construction process was agreed upon, where the building design tries to limit the number of trades on site to contain overall cost,

yet places emphasis on the precision of fabrication and detail in the build. The steel and pivoting timber batten "veils" were made off-site, while the hand-crafted stone fireplaces in Tasmanian dolerite and hand-poured concrete were done on-site. The timber screens, which can rotate to 45- and 90-degree angles or open and shut completely, offer privacy and private spaces without compromising views.

Imagining a "soaring, planar roof", Stuart praises their structural engineer Jim Gandy for bringing his vision to life using only a minimal number of support columns. So, too, the builder Scott Cordwell, a long-time collaborator who understood implicitly what Stuart aimed to achieve.

"Part of sustainability is durability and sometimes that's overlooked," says Stuart. "While industrial materials can have a carbon footprint in their manufacture, they can make up for this by being solid, low maintenance and enduring."

Designed as a family holiday retreat as well as a high-end property to rent, the house offers private and public spaces that are generous and minimalist but forever humbled by the views they beget. From the wind-protected sun-filled courtyard featuring an



outdoor fireplace at the back you can look right through the indoor living space out to the ocean view on the other side. The three bedrooms, all with ensuites, also have front row seats to the ever-changing southern Tasmanian seascape.

For Stuart, the reward of the project came from having a great team and clients to work with. "The owners took a brave step with a project like this. They were trusting, open and receptive."

But above all else, he says, it's about whether architecture can elicit emotion and offer an uplifting experience. "It's wonderfully gratifying to give something significant to your client. To have them walk into a building and see them so moved, so taken with what they're experiencing. That's what's meaningful to me." ✦

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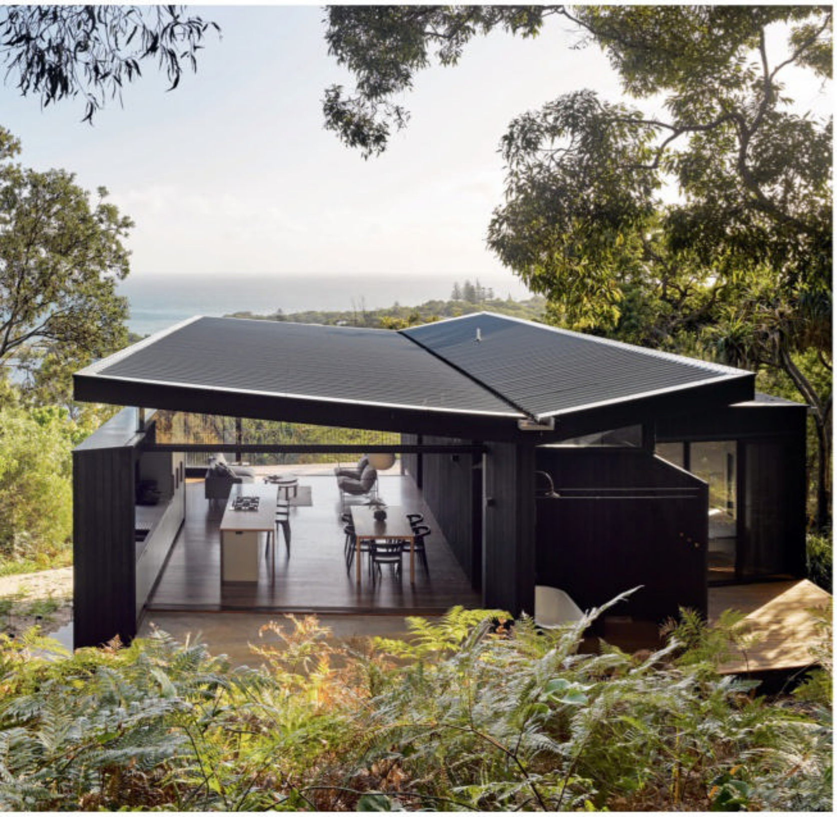
BAKER

BOYS beach house

An illusion of camping and the absence of technology bring families together for contemplation and restoration.

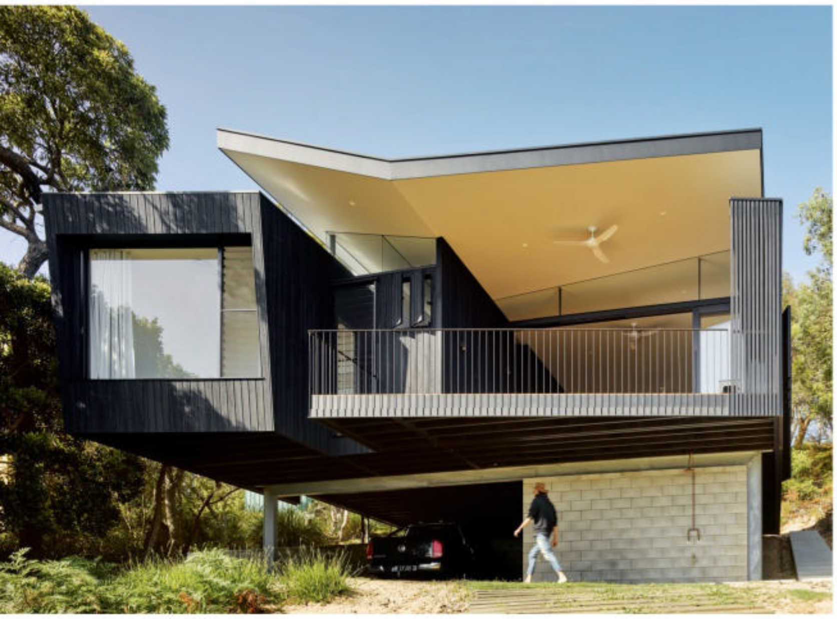
WORDS Jane Riley
PHOTOGRAPHY Christopher Frederick Jones



A desire to stay faithful to the experience of camping underscored every aspect of the design of this holiday home perched above one of Minjerribah's – North Stradbroke Island's – iconic coves, Cylinder Beach off the Brisbane coast.

"The clients wanted to live there as if they were camping," says architect Erhard Rathmayr of the three owners who were going to share use of the holiday home. "So that meant being close to nature and having a simplicity of experience."

The design cues came from the basic premise of a tent acting as shelter, as well as the layout of the local camping ground where many families hire three of the 6x6 metre-squared areas so they can have a sleeping tent, a kitchen tent, and a centre one for living, all covered by a tarpaulin.



"The brief was quite simple in many ways," explains Erhard. "We had to make the most of the views of the ocean but equally balance the views towards the bush reserve at the back … It had to be a place for contemplation and bringing the family together."

Specifying a single level house, the clients also desired bedrooms that were small and functional, to serve as sleeping pods only, and for there to be multiple living areas where people could gather and mingle. Installing Wifi and a television were strictly forbidden.

To this end, Erhard and his team placed the kitchen down one side of the house and four bedrooms along the other. In the middle is a strip of two minimalist bathrooms, plus an indoor-outdoor bathtub that faces the bush reserve. The central living area has three different spaces: the internal living-kitchen area; a wind-protected, concreted gathering space that begins at the kitchen and steps back towards the bush with a sunken, central fireplace; and a deck at the other end which steps down so that the balustrade doesn't impede the vast ocean views.

A simplicity of materials – raw concrete, timber, steel and glass – exemplify Erhard's aim to "hold back as much as we can and work with as little as we can". Taking on a less-is-more approach may sound simple yet comes with many challenges when you're building on a steeply sloping site in a high bushfire risk environment on an island.

In order to fulfil the clients' desire for a single-level dwelling with views at both ends on the slope, the only solution, says Erhard, was to create a semi-cantilevered building. Following the natural layer of the landscape, the building extends out with a 4.5-metre cantilevered deck so that the house is both anchored to the ground and floating above it. The remote location called for the steel structure to be manufactured off-site and bolted together on-site. Erhard praises the teamwork

of engineer and manufacturer in bringing to life their architectural drawings and achieving flawless precision through 3D engineering.

This idea of lightness extends to the abundance of glass throughout, plus the roof, also a product of skilful engineering. "The roof is suspended on poles. It symbolises the idea of a tarpaulin – a lightly floating leaf on top of the separate boxes."

In addition, the house features multiple "openings" which allow an ever-present connection to the outdoors and capture the north-eastern breeze. Shutters on the western (kitchen) side offer ventilation and take out the western sun, while the large sliding door at the back recesses completely into the building making it appear as if it never existed.

Securing a BAL29 – bush fire attack level – rating, Erhard chose a Japanese charred timber cladding called shou sugi ban, which doesn't need painting and is low maintenance. "It has a lovely natural texture and goes very nicely with the bush setting. It also works well inside with our three-box concept."

However, a BAL29 rating demands no screening on the windows or doors. Erhard overcame this by using sliding doors and shutters, which are classified as doors, and reducing the windows to a few screened breezeways at the end of each corridor. Despite all the unscreened openings and its proximity to the bush, mosquitos are minimal due to its breezy, dune-top location.

For Erhard, it wasn't until he got the rare chance to stay in one of his builds that he could experience whether he'd achieved the perfect melding of being at one with nature and expert engineering. "The play of light and shadow in the house came up nicer than I expected," he says.

Then, one morning with a coffee on the deck, he recalls sitting there for hours. "It felt as if I'd been meditating, taking in nature with all these different lights. It was so intense and gripping. They [the clients] wanted it to be a house for family and a place for reflection and contemplation, and that's exactly what it did for me." ✦

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WATEGOS

residence

A sleek, concrete sculpture maintains a green initiative through modesty and consideration.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Michael Nicholson

Maybe it's an 'S' for superman, or an 'S' for simplicity but an 'S' shaped home is a stand-out above exclusive Wategos Beach in northern New South Wales. Designed by Sam Zaher of Zaher Architects, it was completed in 2015 for clients he describes as, "a couple who are very open minded and lovely". The original house, built in the 1950s, had been their home from 2004 until a cyclonic wind took the roof off. Not surprisingly the brief given to Sam was, "I want a house that doesn't leak and doesn't blow in the wind." It also had to be modern with a concrete floor.

The site was small and oriented to the northeast and Sam's response took in the harsh marine environment. With concrete as the prime ingredient, he chose enduring materials such as stone, timber, steel and powder coated aluminium. In maintaining a green initiative, he was conscious of minimising chemicals and VOC (volatile organic compound) off gassing. "If you look at the houses on either side, they've got composites and steel and they're rusting and deteriorating, and this house will be the same in the next fifty years. That's why when you look at the façade, you will see hardly any screws or nails, it's all put together in a way that doesn't need maintenance," he says.

The design concept was a pure, simple structure in the shape of a folded 'S' that appears to almost support itself. "People think it's after my initial 'Sam' and if I got the project next door, I'd do the 'Z', but I don't think that's happening," he jests. The form mimicked a sculpture and morphed effortlessly into a house with the addition of glass. For the flooring Sam selected concrete with a high compressive strength and honed it. "If you think of a piece of marble or a diamond that is rough, when you hone it, it becomes

shiny. So, we honed the floor, and it feels amazing, it feels like dolphin skin," he explains. It was then treated with a penetrating hardener so walking barefoot doesn't feel like walking on plastic or on a sealer. Sam says the effect is completely different to walking on polished concrete.

The small 670 square metre site presented challenges. To achieve the "off the grid" initiative, an underground basement was dug out to house a 15-kilowatt energy system and a rainwater tank. Fortunately, the builder – Ian Heanes from Heanes Built – was seasoned and specialised. Sam explains, "We found a few rocks and we had to cut them out for the footings," which added a considerable cost.

The clients' wish for two self-contained levels translated to almost two houses on the tight, suburban block. Downstairs there are three bedrooms, living, kitchen, dining designed for their adult children and their families and upstairs two bedrooms, living, kitchen, dining for them. Sam's task was to satisfy the number of rooms and spaces while maintaining a large grass and garden frontage. He was also conscious of not stirring contempt by blocking the view corridors of neighbours. It was hard to keep everyone happy. At the rear of the block, masterful engineering was required to construct a bridge that connected the bitumen on council land with the garage doors. This removed a short-cut to the beach, access well-used by locals. "Of course, the neighbours weren't happy because in the old days the house that was originally there was half the size," Sam says. It was necessary to stop people from walking through the back yard for privacy reasons, but there was a complaint over the use of council land to fulfil this.

For Sam it was a delightfully rare project because the clients bestowed him with 100 % autonomy. If he asked their perspective on lights or door handles, their response was always, "Whatever you want Sam, you're the architect." He says that often halfway through a build, clients typically want to start choosing their own tiles, taps and showerheads which he doesn't mind, but it can be

frustrating when there's not a shared design aesthetic. He remains happy with his ability to ensure the build remained a modest, beautifully detailed, not "over-the-top" house. The 'S' for signature is his favourite feature. "You draw it on the computer, but it's different when you see it in 3D in front of you."

Completed in 2015, the outcome of Wategos Residence exceeded Sam's expectations. The clients are ecstatic. He believes his traits of persistence and dedication are a response to studying architecture later in life. A passion for sustainable design and a youthful exuberance propels him. "Most of Marine Parade is full of million-dollar houses and big-name architects and I think this house sits comfortably among the elite. It is probably one of the best-looking houses in the street," he adds. ✦

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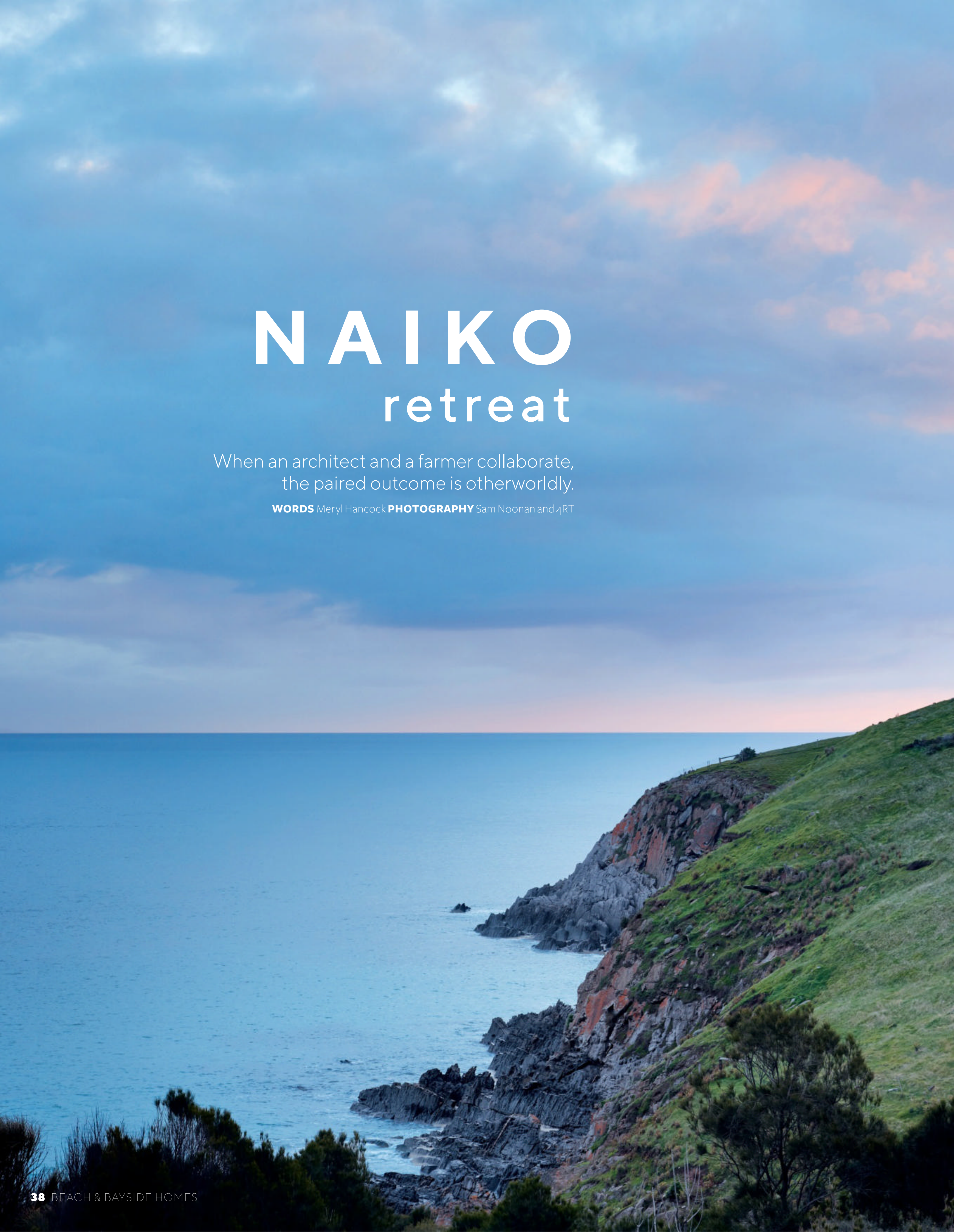


NAIKO
retreat

When an architect and a farmer collaborate, the paired outcome is otherworldly.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Sam Noonan and 4RT

The point where the sculptural cliffs of Deep Creek on the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia descend to a craggy cove with a private sandy beach marked the spot for architect Max Pritchard and his client, the owner of a nearby sheep farm. Standing on the exclusive parcel of land recently purchased, nature did the talking. The outlook from the remote, rugged coastline is due south across the Backstairs Strait to Kangaroo Island and behind to the north, the Heysen Trail brushes past on its way up the Flinders Ranges. A large conservation park is tucked into the eastern aspect of the landscape enriched by wildlife, waterfalls and wildflowers.

Taking these natural elements on board, the brief was to design a family retreat with sanctuary overtones. While wandering the site together, client and architect agreed that drama was key. There was no need to look far. Having previously sent his client to Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island for a taste of his architectural prowess, Max was empowered with the trust to devise a build that followed the contours of the ridgeline. He was conscious of keeping the profile slim for passive solar gain as well as for the ease of cross ventilation. "It wasn't a case of considering a lot of options, it made sense," he offers.

Naiko (meaning mother in the indigenous dialect Ramindjeri) was born in 2018 using existing stone from the site topped up by supply from another property owned by the client. The building was

anchored by a stone retaining base and a stone fireplace that blends with the exterior. Beyond the build-up, the corrugated iron curves down to the seaside reflecting the waves and the hills in a smooth, artistic gesture.

Max explains, "We dug it into the hill which is quite a steep slope with retaining walls to form a courtyard on the back so in the big winds you can shelter in that courtyard and make the most of the winter sun and still see through to the sea."

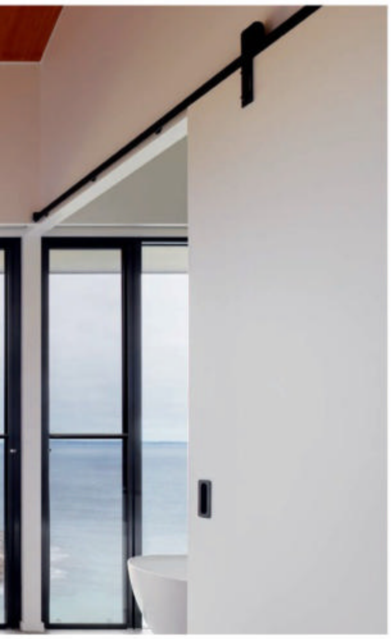
Solar panels were added to the rooftop and three concrete rainwater tanks were semi-submerged at the rear creating yet another sculptural feature. Completely off grid, there's an interior wood heater for when the icy sea breezes whip through, and each of the three bedrooms has a spectacular ocean view and an ensuite.

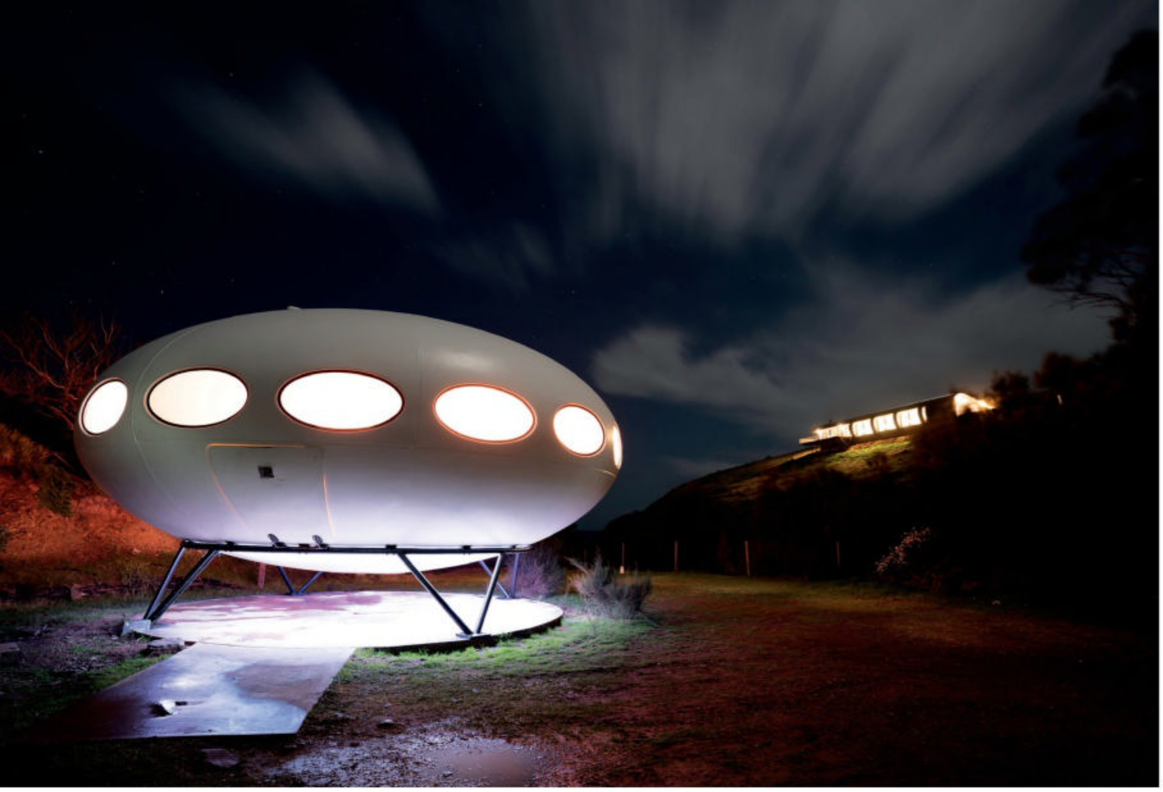
Unchanged from his original plans, Max describes the construction as a "painless process", facilitated by an existing relationship with builders who simply delivered. The client is thrilled with the outcome and there are more collaborations in the pipeline. "I was with the client yesterday and he'd just come from Naiko that morning and said that if he wants to do some work, he can achieve so much from down there because it's such a relaxing place to clear the mind," he says.

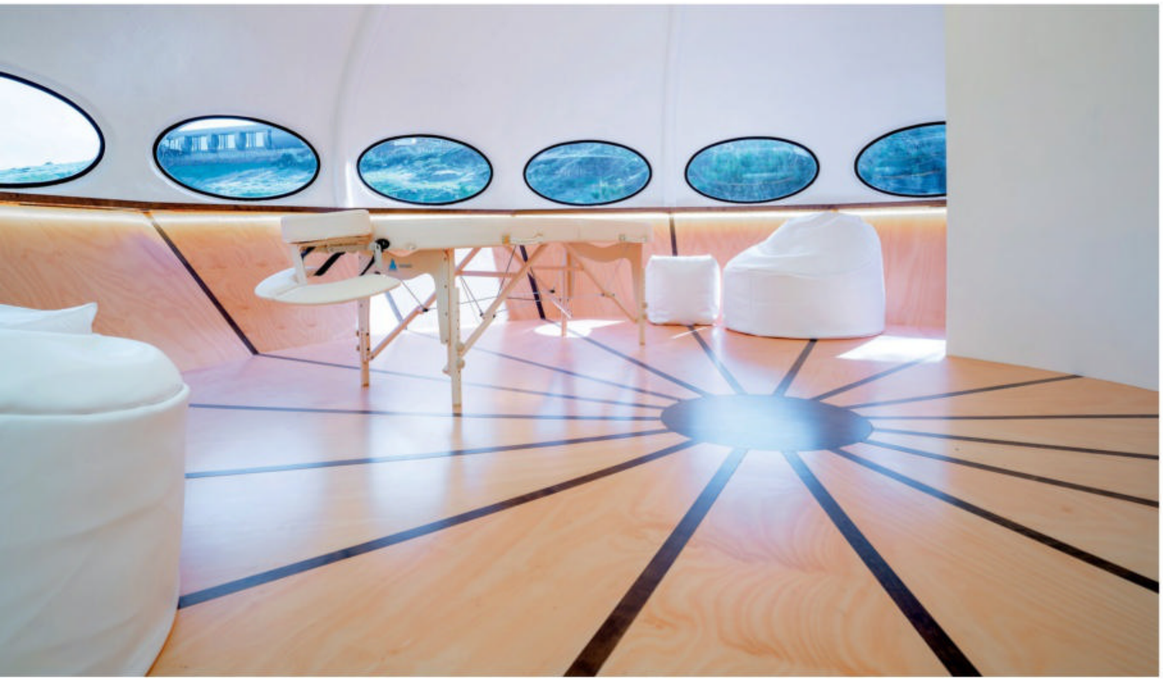
Although not built with the intention of sharing, it is now marketed as a wilderness retreat and getaway destination with a novel treat. What appears to be a flying saucer hovers adjacent to Naiko. Once a holiday home, the abandoned pod – named Futuro – astonishingly came with the property and became another of Max Pritchard Gunner's pet projects.

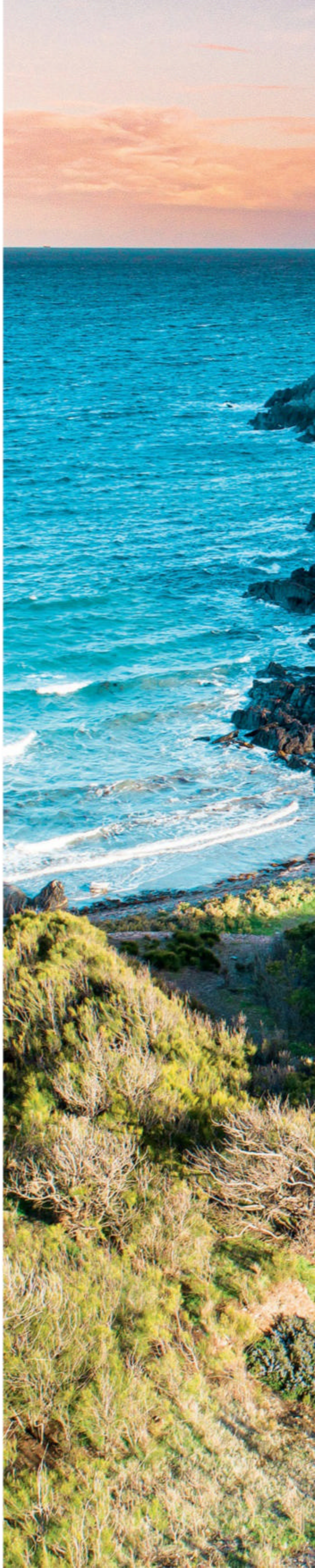
Designed in 1968 by Finnish Architect Matt Suuronen as a prefabricated ski cabin, the Futuro celebrated the conquering of space and a nation's faith in technology. Built from fiberglass reinforced polyester plastic, the premise was a home that was quick to heat and easy to build in rough terrain. Easily transportable in one piece by helicopter, it could be quickly assembled and dismantled by virtue of 16 bolted, Meccano-like elements. Only 100 were manufactured as by the mid-1970s a reluctance to embrace their avant-garde appearance, bordering on a hostility to the design, killed production. Of those, perhaps only 60 remain with five navigating their way onto Australian terra firma.

The opportunity to preserve the Futuro was within Max's orbit. Reviving the iconic international design was a privilege,









as was the spin-off to exponentially swell the cult following of Futuro enthusiasts worldwide. While the exterior shell, water and waste plumbing were largely intact, the interior suffered from neglect and required a total refit.

With no conservational constraints, Max replaced the floor with radiating plywood panels segmented by hardwood battens to accentuate the original structural joints and tucked subtle LEDs into the ledges of the elliptical portholes. The restoration is complete and as an adjunct to a reservation at Naiko, guests wanting to "space out" can climb the hatch into the revamped pod for a therapy treatment.

One of the many positives to emerge from the two diverse briefs is an ongoing relationship with the client who has become a friend. Max confides, "It doesn't seem like work when we're discussing new projects, it's social and that's what's amazing, that I'm getting paid to have a good time." ✦

www.mpgarchitects.com.au

K & C house

The timber clad dwellings of the notorious Sly brothers are contemporised together and apart.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Tom Ferguson

On a sandy knoll above Manly Beach in New South Wales, the history of Australian Surf Lifesaving is embedded in the foundations of a heritage site circa 1890. At the sound of a bell, the local Sly brothers would drag their boat down the back lane of their two adjoining cottages to perform ocean rescues. Jo Gillies from Archisoul Architects gives context, "Women had those dreaded pantaloons and were probably drowning easily with all those clothes on, so they were going out and saving them." These actions led to the official founding of Surf Lifesaving Australia. Over the century, the original timber clad homes were renovated multiple times independently of one another, until a double brief gave Jo the opportunity to consolidate two clients on opposite sides of the globe.

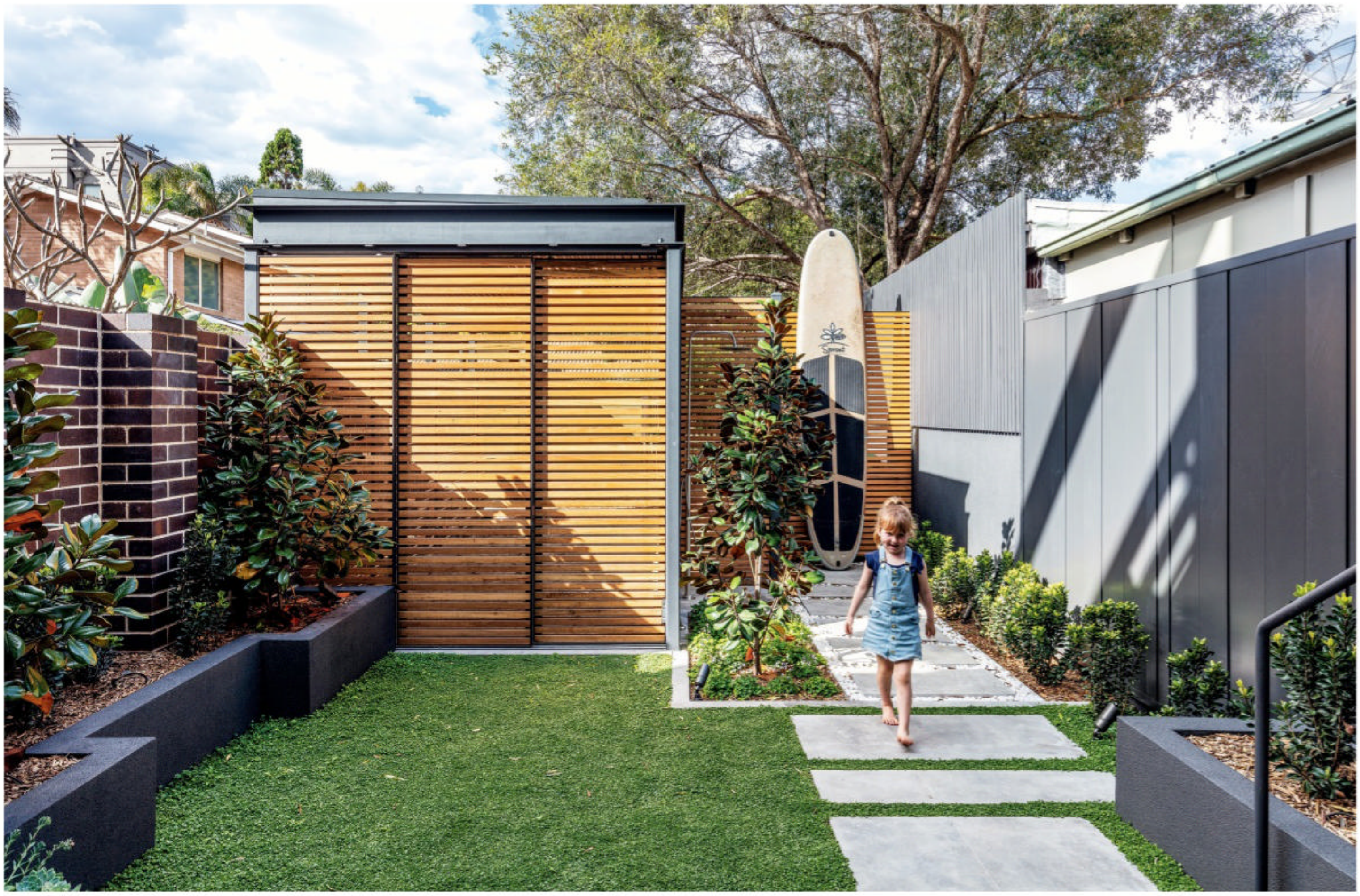
Respecting the characteristics of yesteryear and maintaining the coastal connection was integral to her design concept. In unifying the briefs, Jo anticipated saving time, cost and intrusion. Newmark Constructions won the overall master contract for their high quality and architectural detailing, and within this framework each client had a personalised contract for fit-out. From the outset a heritage consultant was called in and council was also contacted for guidance. "It was a super exciting, very inspiring project to work on because it involved a number of different plays," Jo says.

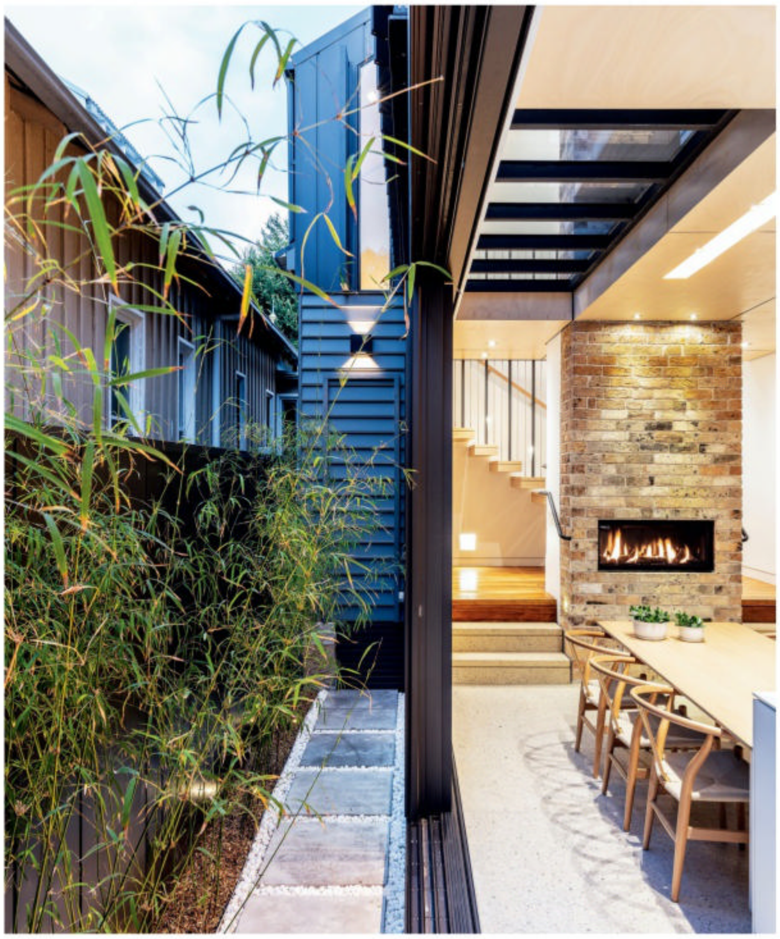
The orientation of the cottages pushed the creative boundaries of the design. Completely landlocked, Jo's challenge was to facilitate solar interplay. The semi on

the northside of the east-west site captured northern light passively, so a balcony, adeptly angled windows and a light-filled stairwell formed the easier response. The semi on the southside known as K & C House demanded more attention. With insufficient floor space to add a void, Jo cleverly introduced a glass floor to harness light. She also added a rear courtyard framed by beautiful slimline, custom-made and thermally efficient doors to enhance the solar access.

The confined sites also required the negotiation of access. The infamous rear lane leading to the ocean feeds off to five houses, some with garages. This meant that driveway sweep angles had to be calculated to enable vehicle movement. A tall, flower-adorned trellis along the lane added to logistics, as it inhibited access for large trucks and the building materials. Instead, the front became the access point with only small trucks directed to the rear. Privacy was also a considerable concern due to the surrounding houses and one neighbour's illegal works built on the boundary. Offsetting these issues Jo says was "tricky".

Materials were dictated by the heritage listing, with the council requiring architectural detailing as a condition of consent. Timber joists and bearers formed the basis of the extensions and steel was incorporated for cross-bracing and to stabilise torsion. The timber frontages were restored to their original beauty, reassigning a beach shack personality. Elsewhere darker colours intentionally lead to recessive and austere traits when viewed from the street and rear. A sleek roofline gives a free-floating appearance. The materials also had to be insulative and thermally responsive. Jo explains, "I call it a total juxtaposition of really modern materials and the old heritage".





The owner of K & C House was living abroad at the time and communication was intense with frequent photographs going back and forth. The client's refined European style drove the fit-out in an exclusive direction. When Jo presented pictures of plywood reminiscent of modern ship interiors, the response was, "Just do it," irrespective of cost. "Sometimes the more challenging sites push more clever design solutions to respond to that and the client loved it. He started out with 'X' amount of budget and kept increasing it," she says.

Internally the configuration is flexible, two downstairs bedrooms are easily convertible to living rooms if required. Upstairs there are also two bedrooms, one is three meters high and notably spacious for the narrow site. "When the doors are tucked into the cavity, the sea breezes come through. It's just a lovely space, a very nurturing bedroom," says Jo.

The outcome of the 2019 renovations has exceeded both architect and the clients' expectations. Jo attributes the success to a combination of things. "I always pride myself in using intuition in the design process, so intuitive ideas just dropping a lot and I run with them. If they work, happy days," she says. Other qualities essential to an outstanding execution are strategic thinking and eliciting the best possible performance from her team. The overall brief was a rare project, with multiple highlights. It presented Archisoul Architects with an aesthetic autonomy informed by clients with diverse perspectives and taste. Jo says simultaneously bringing together one builder with two clients in a prime location in Manly was a privilege and paying tribute to Australia's historic surf culture and its founding local legends was another. ✦

www.archisoul.com.au

OWSTON hill

Roof terrace views to Rottnest Island integrate two modernist coastal-inspired homes with the horizon.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** Jack Lovel

34c Owston Hill

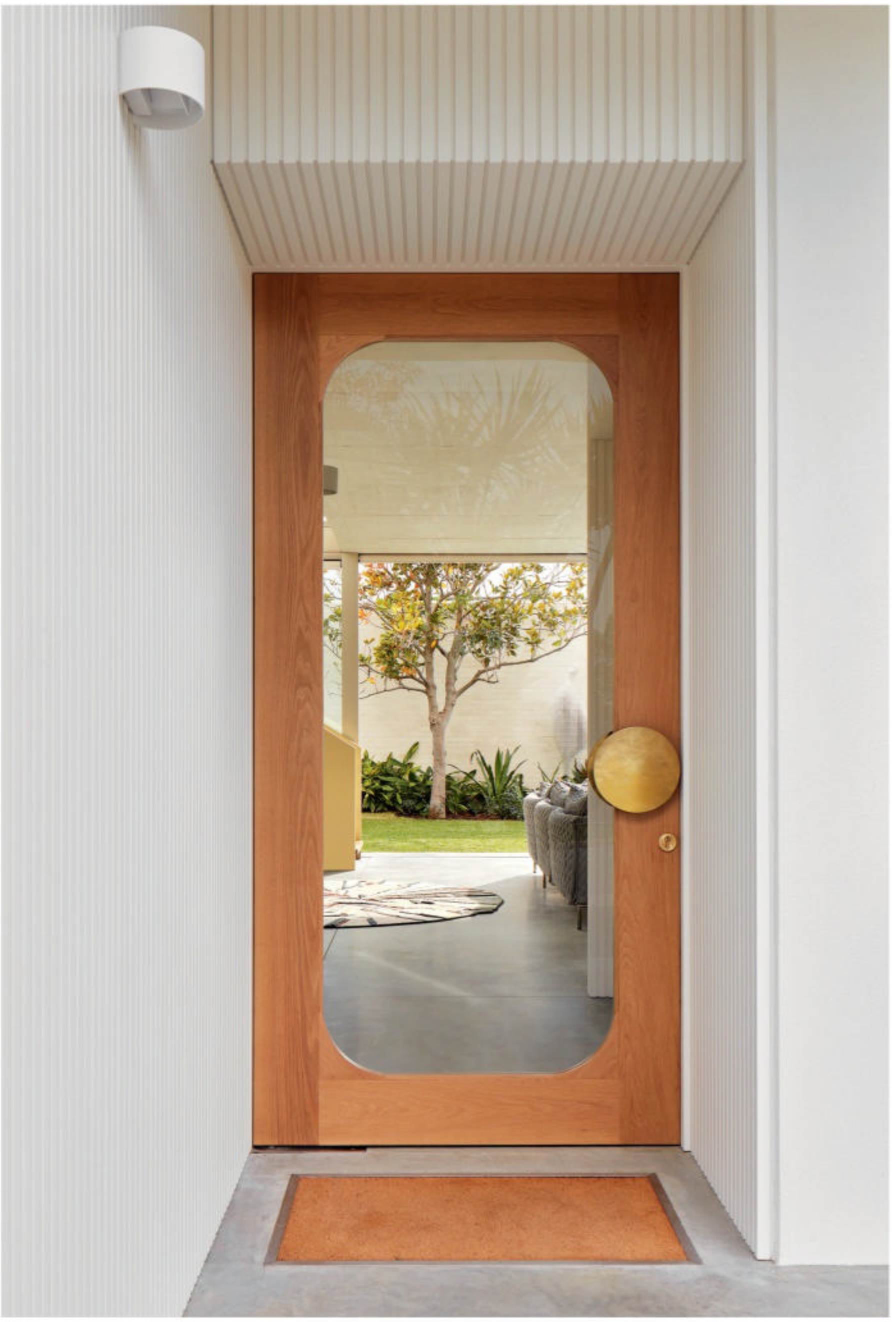
Few suburbs offer such all-encompassing natural beauty and diverse landscape as the leafy riverside suburb of Perth's Mosman Park. So when an opportunity arose to design and build on a corner site with views west to the ocean and Rottnest island, south to Freemantle's harbour port, and east to the river, over parkland and a golf course, architect and interior designer Meaghan White dived right in.

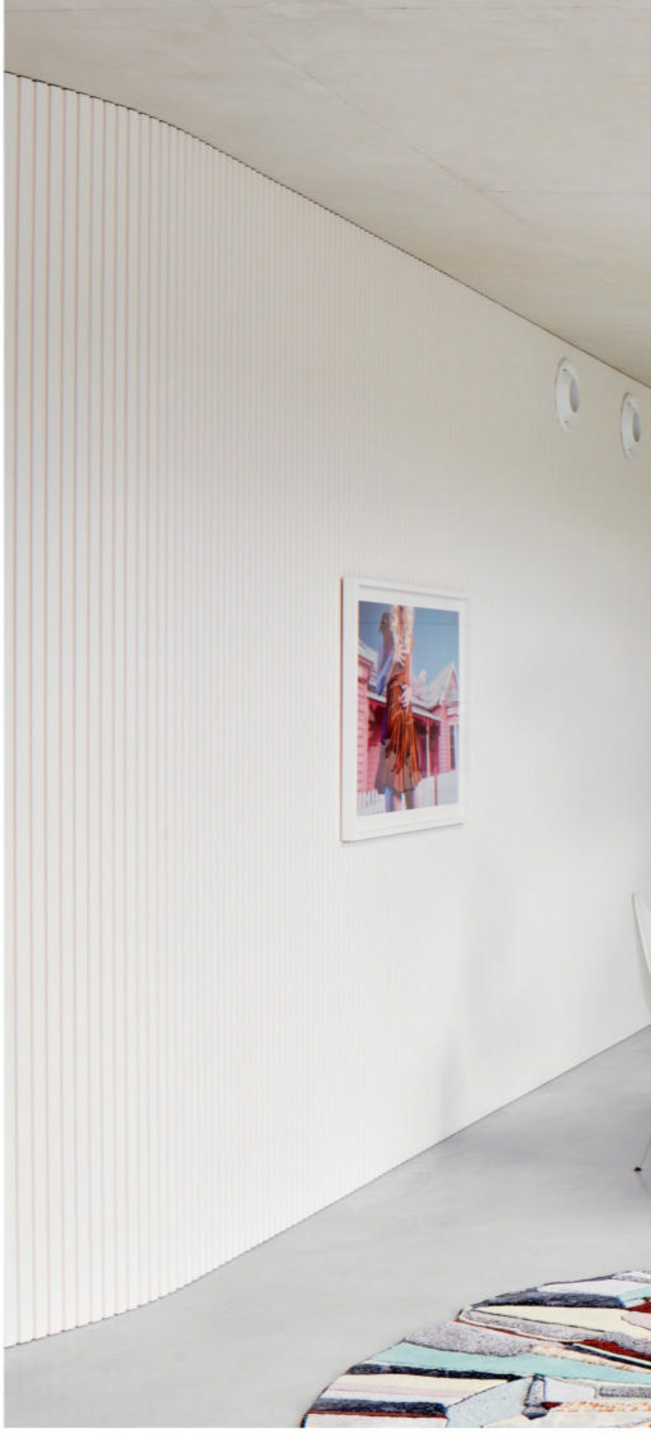
"I wanted to create two amazing homes that captured the magnificence of the site's hill-top location," says Meaghan.

Its unique natural setting as well as the suburb's architectural heritage formed the basis of the designs both inside and out, from the materials and finishes to the homes' ability to tune in to the elements. For Owston Hill embraces the past as much as it does the future.

Taking her cue from the 1950s and 60s when the suburb flourished with architecturally designed modernist homes built predominantly from face brick, Meaghan drew inspiration from the modernist ethos with its simplicity of design and material use, modesty of scale and integration with the landscape.

From a single suburban base, she set about creating two complementary three-bedroom homes on the 800-metre-odd plot without compromising on open space or urban canopy coverage. As well, she wanted the builds to be adaptable to the different living and working needs of a family's life stages – from a young family to one with teenagers to downsizers looking for space and low maintenance.





It was after getting on the roof of the site's original house that Meaghan knew she had to incorporate rooftop terraces not only for the views but to add an extra living area that didn't compromise on green space. For there, during the day, you can see out to Rottnest Island and at night, the boats on the harbour.

"There's something about the ocean's untouched nature with its reach to the horizon," says Meaghan. "It feels infinite; something we can get lost in."

It was after a collaboration formed with clay building material specialists Brickworks to use their common special Bowral Brick 'Chillingham White' that the modernist, coastal-inspired designs took shape. The face brick work not only features heavily outside, including a zig-zag fireplace and matching street wall, but inside as well, where a 30-metre-long backdrop unifies the dining, entertainment and outdoor spaces.

"I wanted to keep the palette simple, neutral and natural," says Meaghan of the off-white bricks and light grey concrete floors. "And I wanted the materials to be timeless in both aesthetics and durability."

It's the mix of sandy brickwork and white walls that perfectly evoke the shores of both the nearby river and beach, as well as imbue lightness and space into what is, in fact, a compact area. Layered onto this are master bedroom windows finished in gold reflective film, a gold-painted steel feature staircase, a brass front door handle, and brass bathroom and kitchen hardware – all of which add shimmers of "ritzy-ness". These gold accents, combined with interior timber joinery, exterior timber panels and the white and olive floor tiles on the roof terrace, reflect the tones of the indigenous eucalypt and peppermint trees and neighbouring parkland outside. The overall effect is one of calmness and serenity in what is an urban infill area.

"You constantly feel connected [to the outdoors] wherever you are in the house," says Meaghan.

Even the modernist-inspired American Oak-framed glass front door was designed to have a view: of the Magnolia tree specifically chosen and strategically placed in the courtyard.

In contrast to the angular form of brick, Meaghan introduced curves wherever she could. There's a series of soft-curved timber panels that intersect the exterior face brick; a curved brick balustrade and planter box on the roof terrace; an elliptical kitchen island; and a circular upstairs window – all of which soften the angles inside and out.

Environmentally, the houses are sympathetic to the elements. Their design allows for the northern sun to come inside in winter, while offering one hundred per cent natural cross ventilation via louvre windows to capture the cool breezes of summer.

"The house is also basically run by Tesla," says Meaghan of the innovative 14 kw Tesla Powerwall battery system that harnesses the sun all-year round and reduces the homes' reliance on the grid.

But the icing on the cake for Meaghan was being able to collaborate with fellow architect and artist, April Pine to design and install three of her sculptures in one of the Owston Hill homes, including one of her sculptural 'men' for the rooftop deck.

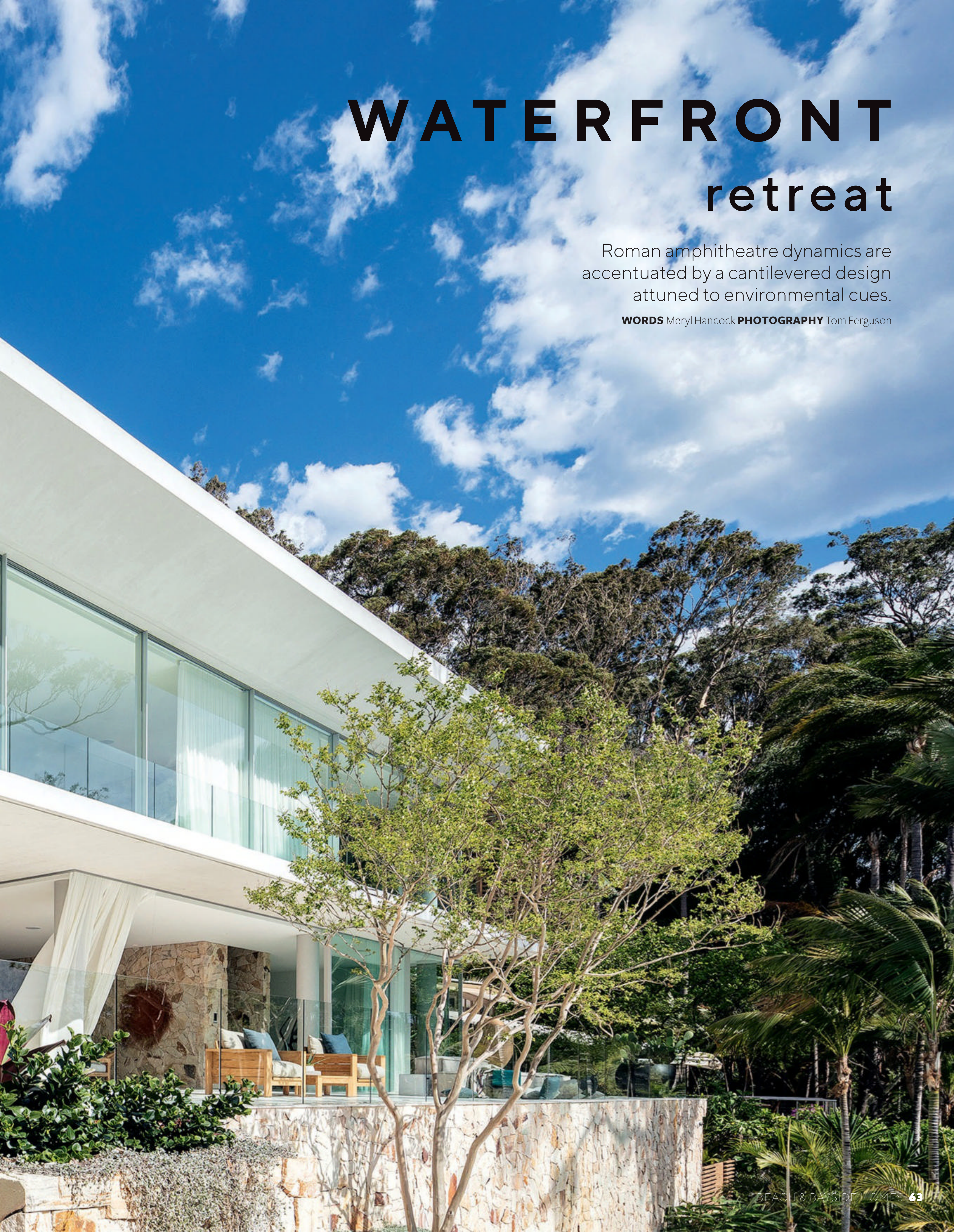
"I still drive past to admire the houses," says Meaghan. "I admire what we created as a team – architect, consultants and trades. They're a structural element in the landscape but also loving homes that make you feel part of the nature around them." ✦

www.meaghanwhite.com | www.owstonhill.com

WATERFRONT retreat

Roman amphitheatre dynamics are accentuated by a cantilevered design attuned to environmental cues.

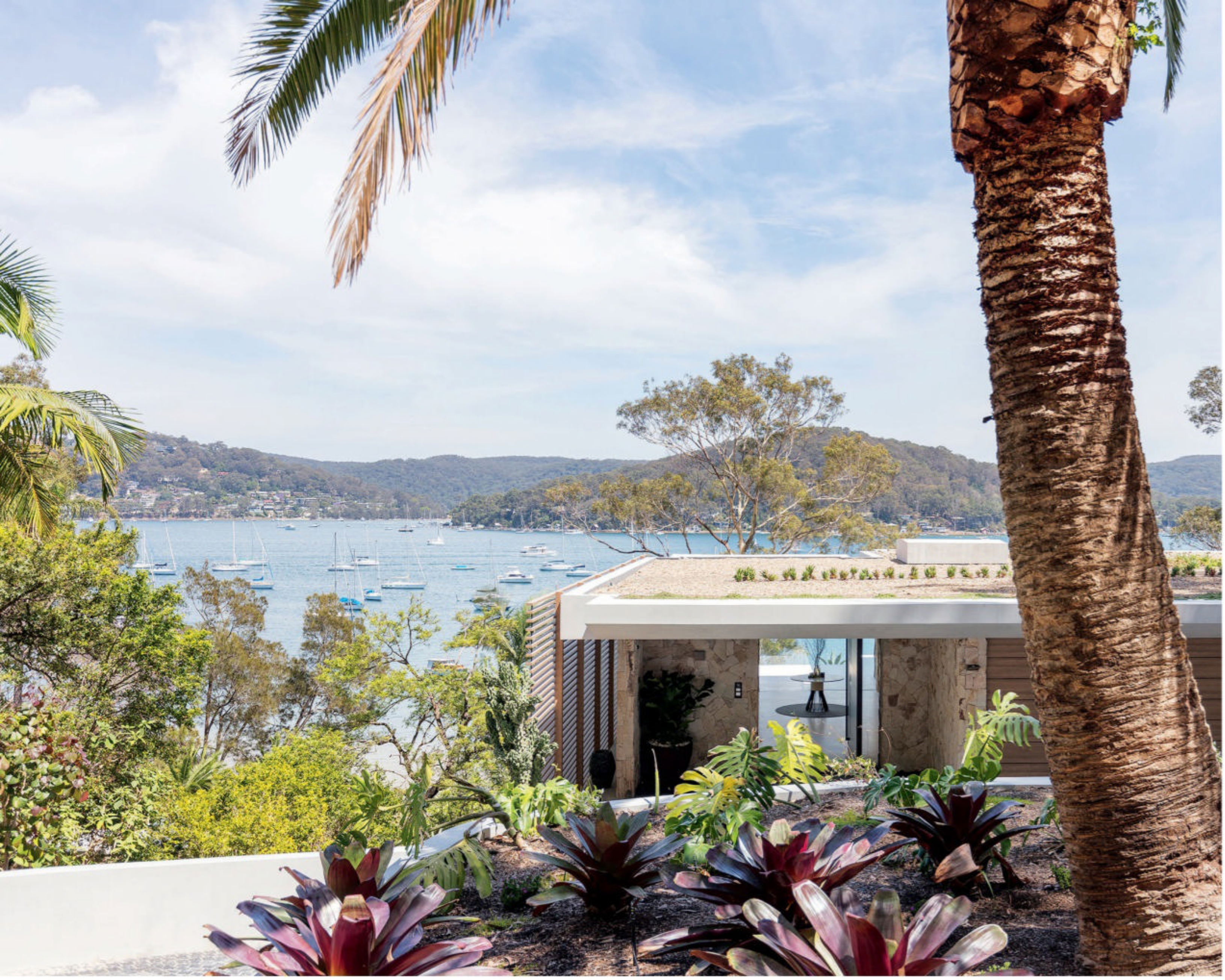
WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Tom Ferguson



When Koichi Takada and Georgia Wilson of Koichi Takada Architects were assessing a site in Newport, Sydney, they didn't want to leave. Standing on the water's edge they bombarded the clients with questions to prolong their stay - "Is there anything else you want to ask us?" They had descended the site's steep terrain through tree canopy to an expanse of sea and sky. The view and amazing acoustics took centre stage as if watching from within a Roman amphitheatre.

Their brief was to create a 'sanctuary' with opportunities for entertaining family and friends, in line with a "Waterfront Retreat". The starting point for the design concept was a series of cantilevered concrete platforms that followed the terrain and maximised living spaces with minimal disturbance to the site. Orientation was west facing so presented conflict in harnessing natural beauty while managing harsh sunlight that could potentially intensify. Koichi explains, "This climate change issue really worries us. Not just the west facing sun, the rising water, the flooding in other parts of the world, for us it's the bushfire. Temperatures are increasing and all of us, including architects, have a responsibility to respond and improve upon this. The design of the house increasingly needs to have more layers."

Using computer technology, every minute of the sun's pathway was simulated and the 'doubling up' effect of reflections on the proposed build was determined. "We live 90% of our life indoors so it's really important how we design and equally 80% of what we do as designers determines the performance of the outcome," Koichi says. Environmental zoning informed the material selection but embracing nature was always key. The roof is the first thing to appear on approach to the site, and it was deliberately blended away from a brash, industrial look. A simple colour palette of pale concrete, light coloured sandstone and timber battens on the sides, absorbed the build into the surroundings. "It does mean when you look at the site, the landscape takes precedence and it sits quite comfortably," explains Georgia.



The design premise for the living space was to emulate the feeling of being on top of the water. A tapered concrete slab worked with a thin glazing unit to dissolve the glass line when opened, accentuating the panorama. This space is protected by a 1.8m overhang that creates shelter from the rain and steamy summer temperatures. "The feeling when you stand there is you forget there's land in front of you. It's like being in a boat," says Georgia.

It was a challenging project but in Koichi Takada Architects' favour was a unique relationship with the builder Jake Wall of J Group, who was also the client. Waterfront Retreat was his third collaboration with Koichi Takada Architects, so Jake brought extensive knowledge and experience to the build. Site access took many forms and required ingenuity. The steep, single lane driveway was impeded by a large tree so negotiating materials from the top of the hill downwards was incredibly difficult. Barges were used for some material delivery and a mature tree was delivered to the property by helicopter.

The interior layout involved many debates with the living area and bedroom allocation treated like a Tetris game. The clients juggled options and decided the entertainment quarter should be at the lowest level close to the water, with the bedrooms up high within the tree canopy. Koichi's design philosophy was embedded in these conversations. He believes an architect's role is to be invisible and listening and responding to clients and environmental cues inspire outcomes. Waterfront Retreat is a prime example, "Pretty much every room constantly has a connection with water. It's never boring because it's nature. It's never static, it's constantly changing over the seasons. It's kind of living architecture," he says.

Koichi's favourite feature is the sunken lounge of the pool area. With a stone wall separating the house from the infinity pool in front, he says it feels like a sanctuary within a sanctuary. He also loves the bar and pizza oven, "I mean weekends must be amazing, entertaining family and friends. It is every Australian's dream house."

For Georgia her magic feature is the tapered slab. The hours spent designing were affirmed by a visit after the pour. From the refined edge, the echo of lapping waves reflecting off the slab, the salt infused breeze and the infinite panorama engaged all senses. "We can draw it and we can model it but to stand there and experience it was like - WOW," says Georgia.

Completed in 2017, Waterfront Retreat was a "fantastic project" that relied on open communication and trust. Koichi says, "It's a big compliment to Jake and his team. It's a place for escape and it would be the perfect place to be in a lockdown, as most of us have recently been experiencing." ✦

www.koichitakada.com

PANDANUS HOUSE

Protection and privacy eventuate from a design concept that integrates context and climate.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** Christopher Frederick Jones

When a design brief places the outdoor living space centre stage, the challenge becomes multi-fold: to ensure protection from the elements, retain privacy from the neighbours, offer engagement with the interiors and secure views wherever you can.

Situated on the south-east Queensland coast, Pandanus House achieves this and so much more. Created as a "holiday home that may become a home in time", says architect Dan Sparks, its design conceit relies heavily on working with, not against, the climate and the context of the site itself.

"The driving force behind the planning was to create a big outdoor entertaining space that was protected from the south-easterly winds, the rain and the sun," says Dan. "This resulted in a two-box set up, where you've got the living room box which runs east to west and the bedroom box above it. The living room box opens onto the outdoor space underneath, protecting it from the south-easterly winds that are pretty prevalent. Unless it's absolutely blowing a gale and storming, you're also protected from the rain."

The rectangular bedroom box serves as the roof over the outdoor room which flows seamlessly onto a lawn and pool and connects directly to the interior kitchen-living via pocket sliding doors that recess fully into the walls.

With neighbours behind and either side of the property, gaining privacy was paramount. By elevating the house from street level and having the outdoor room semi-sunken into the site, neighbouring houses could effectively be shuttered off.

But the genius of the design is not so much practical as it is aesthetic. For not only does it allow expansive views of the ocean and bush to become the headline act, it makes the road in front of the house completely disappear as well.

"The design was orchestrated to edit out the road," explains Dan. "When you're sitting in the outdoor room

you wouldn't know a road is there. It looks like the garden rolls into the dune."

The layered vista of garden, pool, bush and ocean is made even more seamless by incorporating a 1200-cm wide gap between the lawn and the pool to eliminate the need for a pool fence. As a backdrop to the outdoor space, a large stone retaining wall was built behind that hides an outdoor shower and garden storage area and features tropical planting. A deeper excavation allowed for the addition of a downstairs media room and garage.

As the house primarily faces east, getting as much northern light deep into every layer of the house was another challenge. "We utilised the stair well as a light shaft," explains Dan. "The landings at the top and bottom of each flight of stairs are structural glass and there's a skylight above as well." This means northern light can travel through three storeys to the basement level and allows the stairwell to serve as a thermal chimney.

The juxtaposition of angles and curves was again a response to context. Says Dan, "I was keen to explore a very simple move with respect to these two stack boxes because I could see how it could create a well-protected outdoor room. The angles and curves are about pulling the openable element of the eastern elevation to the living room out of the line of the south-easterly." With the living room pivoted to the north-east, the south-easterly blows along it rather than into it.

"We wanted to soften it by playing with curves in the joinery and in subtle ways elsewhere,' adds Dan. Curves feature in the living room windows, upstairs roof balustrade and the outdoor staircase which is like a piece of sculpture taking you upstairs to the roof garden outside the master bedroom.

To ensure that the bedrooms didn't miss out on aspect or protection, they created, with the help of landscape architect Marc Conlon, a green roof. "When you're there [in the master bedroom], it's like you're on a dune. You don't see that you're a storey and a half above the ground plan."

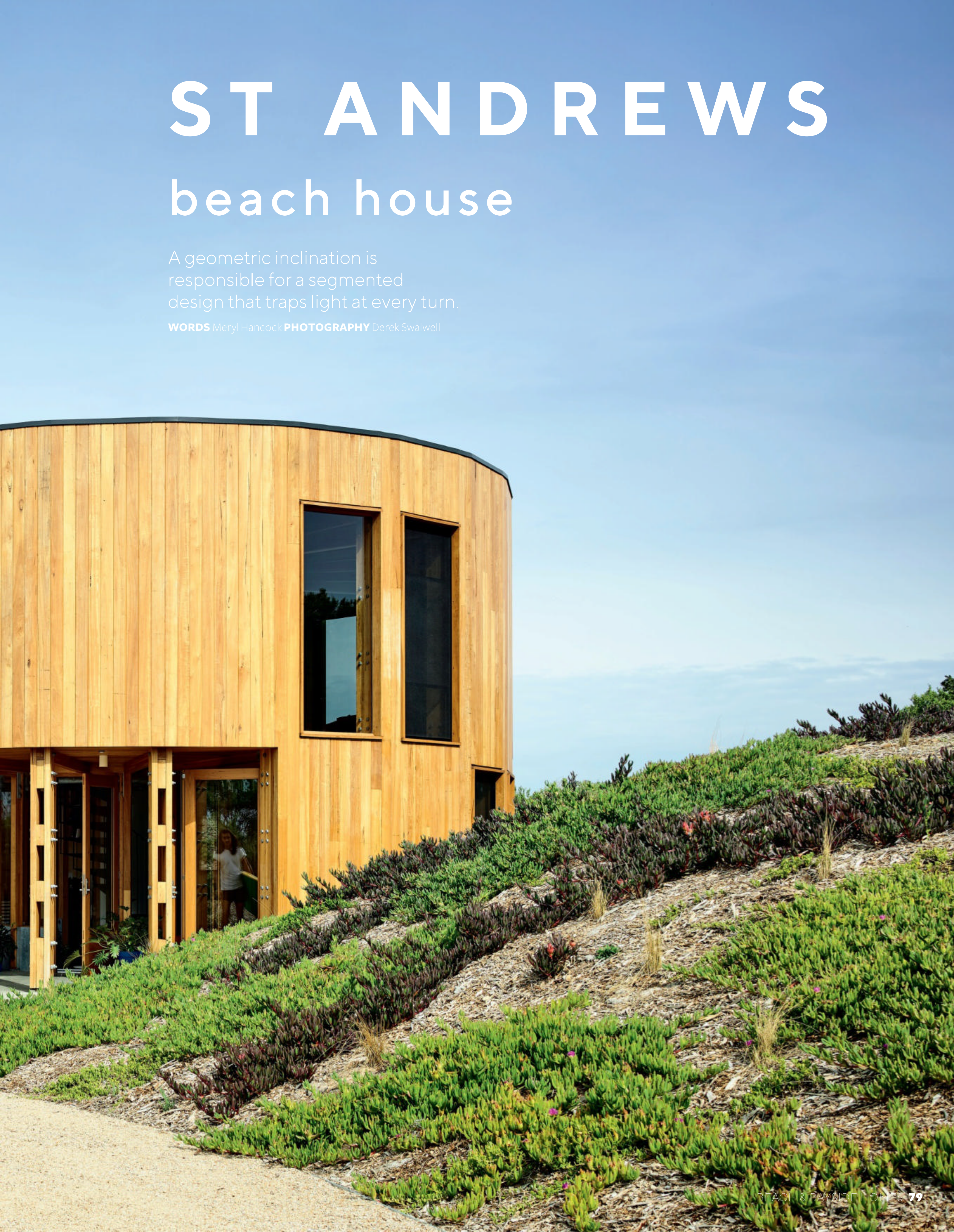
It's here that coastal plants, such as grasses and pig's face, as well as edibles and herbs, feature. The rest of garden is a mix of native and endemic plants and lush tropical species.

With the client requesting off-form concrete, Dan decided to clad the exterior in fibre cement sheeting as a nod to traditional fibro beach shacks, while keeping the interior concrete walls raw. This also achieves insulation for the thermal mass of concrete. The upper boxes are clad in the low-maintenance timber Accoya, and inside, Blackbutt features in the flooring and joinery. Brass accents, such as on the outdoor serving bench and kitchen splashback, add patina and shine to the monochromatic finishes.

Pandanus house shows that with clever, thoughtful design you can not only stay authentic to the environment around you but enhance it as well. ✦

www.sparksarchitects.com

NAISH

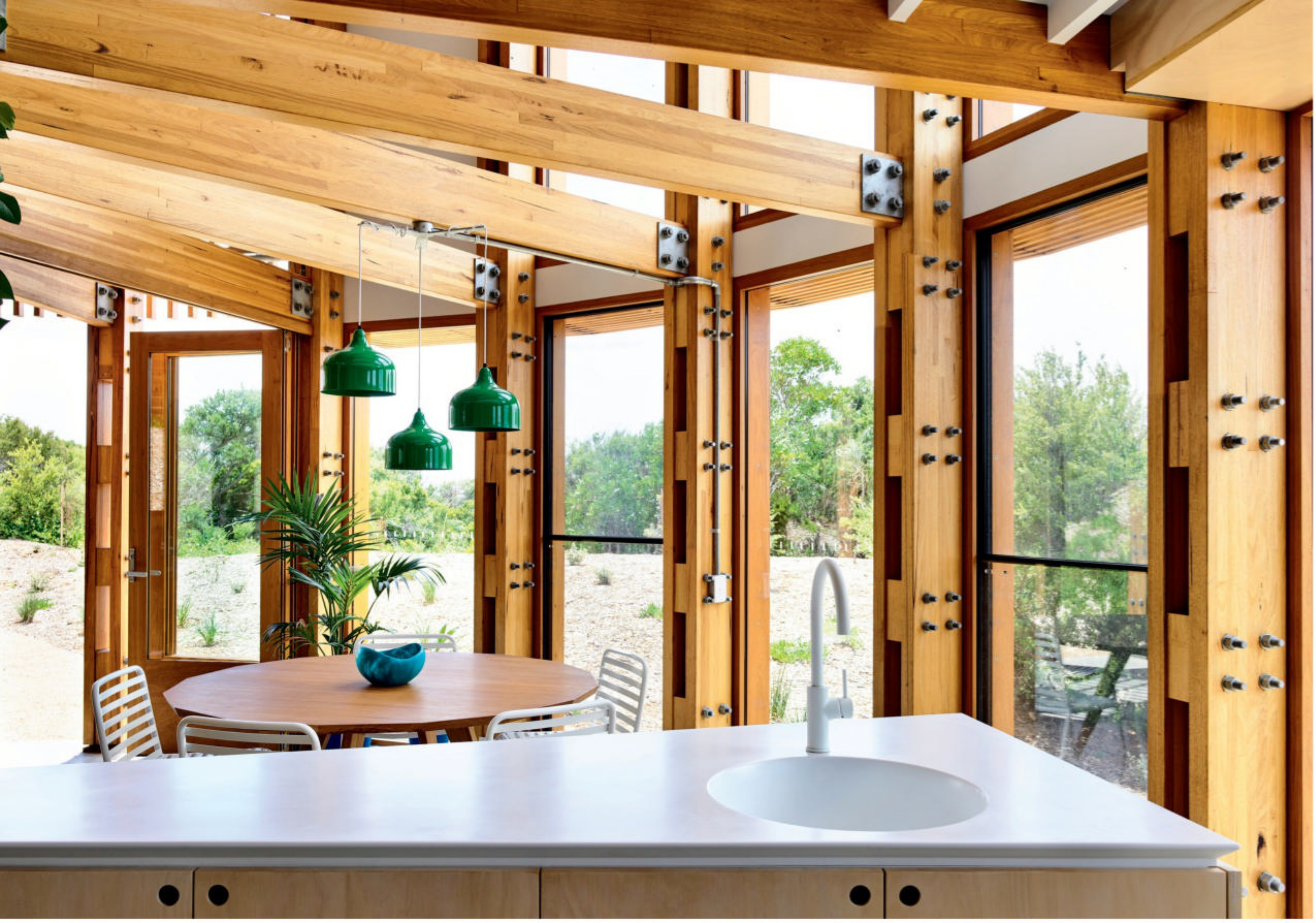


ST ANDREWS

beach house

A geometric inclination is responsible for a segmented design that traps light at every turn.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Derek Swalwell



The thrill of geometry was the key to nailing this unprecedented architectural brief reveals Ray Dinh from Austin Maynard Architects. As project architect for the build at St Andrews Beach on the Bass Strait side of the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, establishing the orientation took time. One of the last properties before the landscape hits national parkland, a sloped, natural clearing in the rugged scrubland hinted at positioning. To the south lies the ocean with the prevailing winds blowing up from Antarctica and to the north and northeast sits the small coastal town of St. Andrews. "You had that inherent goal of wanting to orientate towards the view, which is south, then also wanting to orientate towards the sun which is in the north. And it was those competing considerations that lead to the circular plan," he says.

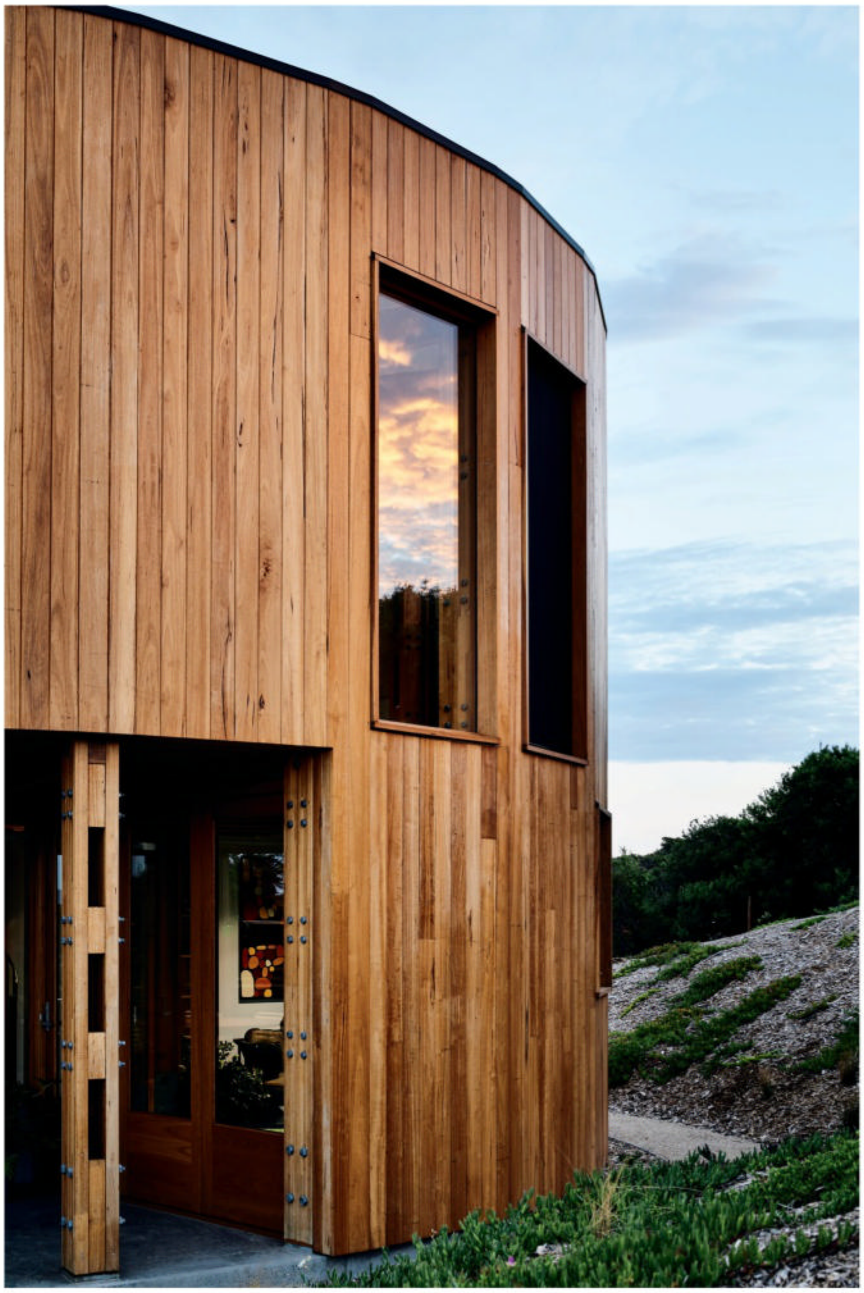
The response to the St Andrews Beach site wasn't over the top as an architectural gesture, as the brief was humble and compact. The clients wanted an escape from their busy working lives in Melbourne, somewhere they could hide away for the weekend, drop their bags and hang out. Generating the concept for the design relied on listening and building trust, and then responding accordingly. What started as a square became a rectangle then a circle. Ray explains, "Eventually and iteratively a concept becomes familiar and reaches a point where everyone is happy."

The first principle of passive solar gain was achievable as the circular form is all front. The shape also allowed for ocean glimpses and capturing the wind songs as the breeze whips through the sand dunes. Vegetation around the site needed clearing in line with bushfire management regulations, which informed the material selection. Chunky, bushfire-resistant timber was chosen for framing, with Silvertop ash cladding for the circumference. The clients wanted the timber to have minimal coating so it would naturally grey off over time and allow the build to settle into the coastal environment.

Due to the sandy ground conditions, the builders encountered a few challenges. There was a lot of retaining required to get driveway access up the sandy hill and when digging the foundations, sand typically blew back across the site and attempted to fill itself in. Selected for their outstanding craftsmanship on a previous Austin Maynard project, the builders were efficient at solving problems generated by the coastal landscape, and adept with the timber detail required for this unique concept.

When the slab was poured the clients cast shells they'd collected from the site into the polished concrete flooring as a tribute. When set, the concrete base took on the stability for the build. Electric hydronic heating was laid as a backup to the sunlight captured by thermal mass principles and solar panels were applied to the metal roof. The inclusion of double-glazed windows and doors and high-performance insulation were integral to sealing the build from the harsh coastal climate.

Although it appears circular, the house is in fact faceted with 24 sides of framing repeated every 15 degrees. With no front or back, there are no beams running from one side to the other, instead it's a radiating structure a bit like a segmented orange. Each of the wedges represents a module of design so the bathroom downstairs occupies three wedges, the kitchen bench is one wedge, the laundry another wedge and the external face of a wedge is either a wall panel or a window

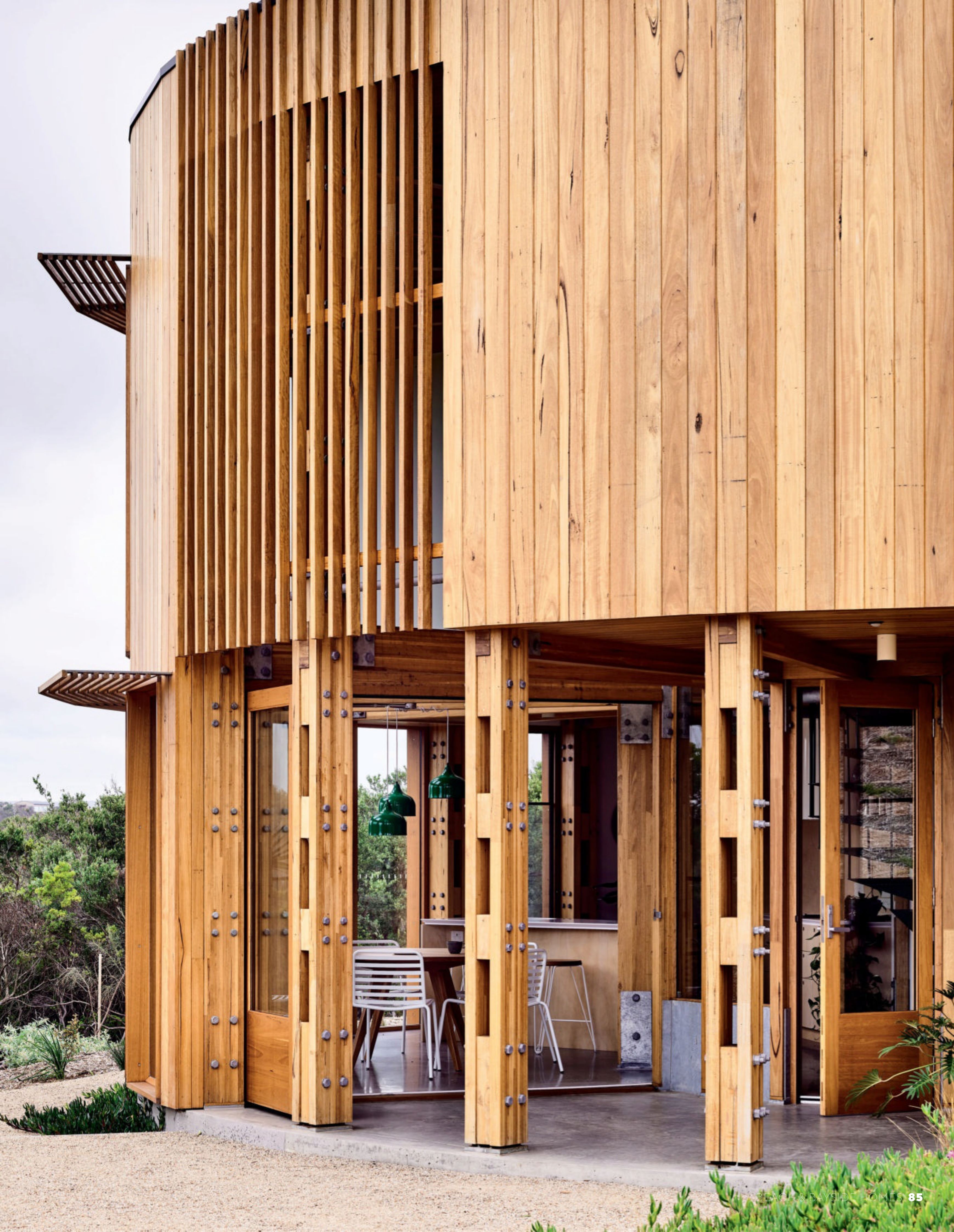


panel. "It was a fun little jigsaw and the client really got into the geometry of it," Ray recalls. As a project architect with an evidently protractor mindset, he admits he thrived on the puzzle of the frames and standardising a detail that could be applied to every single one of the 48 junctions.

The interior is modest, compact and open. On the first level, there's a bathroom and a bedroom with a space that can accommodate friends with sleeping bags, and upstairs a formal bedroom with a wardrobe and an open living space separated by curtains to maximise the flexibility of the layout. The dark green accents of the industrial lightshades, indoor plants, full length curtains, and sculptural circular staircase blend with the greenery beyond the interior framing.

Ray was privileged to stay at the Beach House soon after it was completed in 2017. It was a memorable reward. He recalls tracking the sun from the east and observing the changing light as the day passed, hearing the unforgiving ocean whistling through the open windows, and bush bashing through the scrubland to the wild, woolly beach. "Being able to take a pocket of a wide, rough, open, expansive landscape and doing something small and compact, intensifies your relationship with the landscape. So, siting the house in this spot really amplifies your experience of the surroundings. It's quite a special place," he admits. ✦

www.maynardarchitects.com



ADAPTABLE living house

Prefabricated construction moves next level
with a response to nature that considers climate change.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** NiceBike Content

Jeep

It may surprise many to know that prefabricated construction dates back centuries, with the first known account being in 1624 when a panelised wood house was shipped from England to Massachusetts. It's had a chequered history thereafter with surges of production occurring in America in the early 1900s, when Sears, Roebuck and Co sold close to 100,000 'house kits' via catalogue as part of their 'Modern Homes' program, and in Britain, when the government commissioned thousands of prefab homes to be built to combat the post-World War Two housing crisis.

But it's Sweden which, through its long-established tradition of designing and producing long-lasting and environmentally friendly modular homes, has influenced and led the prefabricated building industry in the twenty-first century. For more than 80 per cent of Swedish homes feature prefab elements.

Cue current day Australia where sustainable architecture and design studio, Breathe and modular infrastructure manufacturers, Spacecube have taken the prefab concept to the next level with their Adaptable Living Range of dwellings.

Their first completed dwelling sits nestled amongst the trees of the Tarkine Forest on the northwest coast of Tasmania, with views out across the bush to the ocean. It embraces the concept of remote living with minimal impact on the environment.

"The core of this idea was being able to connect people to nature, to offer a way to live as part of a landscape, rather than trying to control it," explains Jeremy Fisher, Founder of Spacecube. The brief, he says, was to create "architecturally inspired relocatable dwellings that were modular, with the ability to upsize or downsize as needed".

The objective was to provide a high level of versatility so that the dwellings could evolve and adapt over time – not just by enabling modules to be added or subtracted as required but so that entire buildings could be relocated to a new site or orientation as circumstances or geographic locations changed. It was an opportunity to design a system with unique reconfigurable capabilities, which sets it apart from others in the market, and makes the range suitable for a wide variety of uses – from co-living spaces to short-term dwellings on vacant land, to holiday rentals and tourist accommodation.

ORGANIC
DISHWASHING LIQUID

Microwave
Grill/
Convection
Combi
Defrost
Auto
Cook
Preheat

Underscoring every aspect of the collaboration was sustainability: to have a small footprint, a minimum 7-star energy rating, lots of natural light and air flow, and full off-the-grid solar integration. Breathe's Head of Interiors, Bettina Robinson explains, "The desire was to tread lightly on the environment and be 100 per-cent fossil fuel free. We wanted to demonstrate that a contemporary building process can respond to a climate crisis".

The nature of prefab, where a building is constructed in a factory setting, allows for rigorous quality control; ensures all waste and materials are captured and reused in a closed loop system; and means that the end result can be placed on-site in one day.

"It's a 21st-century building process that responds to issues of climate change in a more meaningful way than a bespoke, traditionally built house requiring dozens of builders and trades on-site for months causing untold damage," explains Jeremy. "At the end of the building's life, it can be taken out of the site with minimal impact and completely reused in another location or new site orientation."

But reaching a high standard of sustainability doesn't come without its challenges. In order to balance the amount of glazing with the energy load impact on each dwelling, Breathe and Spacecube looked to double-glazed windows and orientation to gain as much natural light as possible. They worked closely together to aesthetically integrate the off-the-grid energy solution into the design and avoided hooking appliances up to gas by increasing the solar battery capacity, incorporating Tesla power-walls and a solar hot water system.

Materials and finishes were also chosen for their quality and provenance. Australian-made products feature throughout, such as all the fixtures and fittings, and the hardwood timber floor-to-ceiling doors.

By pairing a sustainably led architecture practice with a modular construction company specialising in flat-packable, reconfigurable, relocatable structures, you have the foundation for a new way of building, designing and living.

"The power of collaboration made this project happen," says Bettina. "The Adaptable Living range is a great example of when two values-aligned design firms come together to consider a unique approach to sustainable dwellings."

And the first home in the range embodies all they set out to achieve. Sitting humbly in the forest, it balances robustness with tranquility and simplicity with longevity. It may appear low key, but it has worked – and is still working – hard to be as minimally intrusive on the environment as possible, while offering its inhabitants an authentic, restful sanctuary. ✦

www.breathe.com.au | www.spacecube.com

BAY HOUSE

When a team of long-time collaborators interprets a 1950s inspired brief, success speaks volumes.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** Prue Ruscoe

While a love of sailing was the primary driving force behind the purchase of this Callala Bay block on the New South Wales South Coast, it was the parallelogram-shaped site that sloped towards the water and offered expansive views over the bay which informed much of the design.

Layered onto this was the owner's desire for a holiday home that could cater to a teenage family and drew inspiration from the minimal steel and glass designs of the Mid-Century Modern Case Study Houses of the 1950s by renowned American architects such as Pierre Koenig and Craig Ellwood.

To honour the topography of this site, architect Michelle Orszaczky of Clayton Orszaczky Architecture designed a rectilinear house plan with a sliding format to fit perfectly with the block's parallelogram shape. "We

created a central glass pavilion with private areas sliding forwards and backwards in response to the site."

The building begins as a low-line simple pavilion at street level, then expands out and over the slope at the back to embrace the sprawling view of the bay beyond. "You come in through a demure entry which offers a taster of all the materials in the house, such as the white brick and the black cladding in V-joint timber," says Michelle. "It's soft and small-scale at the front. Then you walk down [a corridor] and it instantly opens up into wow-factor views. You go from a very calm experience to an amazing one very quickly."

In keeping with the characteristics of modernist architecture, the design embodies a geometric form, a flat roof, floor-to-ceiling glazing and a black steel frame, featuring V-shaped 1950s-inspired columns under the front terrace. It was the latter that was included in the

initial brief, with the owner keen for the steel frame to be bolted together off-site, rather than welded on-site, so that every piece of steel could be galvanised before assembly to help protect it from and give it longevity against the marine environment.

Getting the steel frame designed and made off-site was "quite a feat" explains Michelle. But the detailed preparation and work was worth it because once the frame was on site, it was a quick, seamless process, taking only three to four days to assemble.

It's the broad stroke of glazing in the living area which maximises the views east over the water and captures the northern sun. To this end, the parallelogram shape came into its own. The parent zone was pushed forward to get the best views, and the teenage zone pushed back to the street to get as much northern light as possible into the house and give the kids direct access to the pool. The main living zone became the centre piece: a glazed pavilion running through the middle.

Michelle says that it was this three-zone layout that allowed for both privacy and shared spaces and "prompted a design featuring two axial brick dividing walls which provided opportunities for joinery, privacy and articulation between three distinct zones".

The white brick walls, made from Austral Brick 'La Paloma' in Miro White, are both functionally and aesthetically a stand-out feature of the home. Designed to house joinery, fireplaces, bedroom desks and even a bathroom sink which is built into the kids' bathroom, the thick brick walls are part of the architecture and function of the building.

"They're not empty vessels," says Michelle. "They're very calming and give a feeling of retreat to what is essentially a house that looks outwards. There's a feeling of shelter behind your back. "When you design spaces, you need both those things happening – something to make you feel protected and a feeling that you can look out as well."

A modernist monochromatic palette of black and white not only contributes to the home's restful ambience but allows the outdoor scenery to take centre stage wherever you look – whether from the front door or the garden reflected in the master bedroom mirror. Complementary to this is the Tallowwood flooring and accents of tan, as in the leather kitchen banquette.

While the three-bedroom, two-living home is easily accessible on one level, the site's elevation also allowed for a boatshed and extra outdoor living area to be incorporated underneath. Large black sliding screens hide a boat and kayak storage area – which has since come into its own as a teenage party zone – and in front, there's a shaded deck and fire pit in the back garden.

Michelle says she owes much of the success of the build to not only working closely with the client brief and the site itself, but to all the others who were also a part of its creation: from their "wonderful foreman" Paul Sheather to long-time collaborators, landscape designer William Dangar and Robert Plumb Build.

The result is a holiday home that could be described as cool, calm and collected. ✦

www.coarchitecture.co

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DAYBREAK residence

Australian beach shack nostalgia is invoked by fibre cement cladding, crazy paving, breeze blocks and timber battens.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** Andy Macpherson

What do you do when the site purchased for a sea-change build is completely flat and empty of vegetation, where you can only hear the ocean but not see it? You create your own landscape around which the house is designed.

The piece of land on which the Daybreak Residence now sits is part of a fifteen-year-old subdivision – once a sandmining area – at Casaurina Beach in Northern New South Wales. "It was a single block in a row of houses, facing onto a public by-path leading to the beach," explains architect Paul Uhlmann. "You could say it was a little bit sterile. There was no tree or feature to bounce an idea off." There wasn't even an existing house.

Instead of following traditional archetypal builds where the house is like a "sealed container" from which you look out, Paul and his team decided to start from the centre of the site and work outwards. They looked to a U-shaped design where a central courtyard, featuring crazy paving, a pool, palms and coastal vegetation by landscape architect Dan Plummer, joins two pavilions linked on the first floor by a bridge. "We pushed the design as far towards the beach and as far towards the road to create a central courtyard."

The eastern building, with the master bedroom and living areas, was to be for the owners, while the western section towards the road was to be a guest wing for when their adult children or others came to stay. The primary focus driving the house's overall design and structural properties was ensuring that no matter the season or time of day, you could always be fully connected to the outdoors.

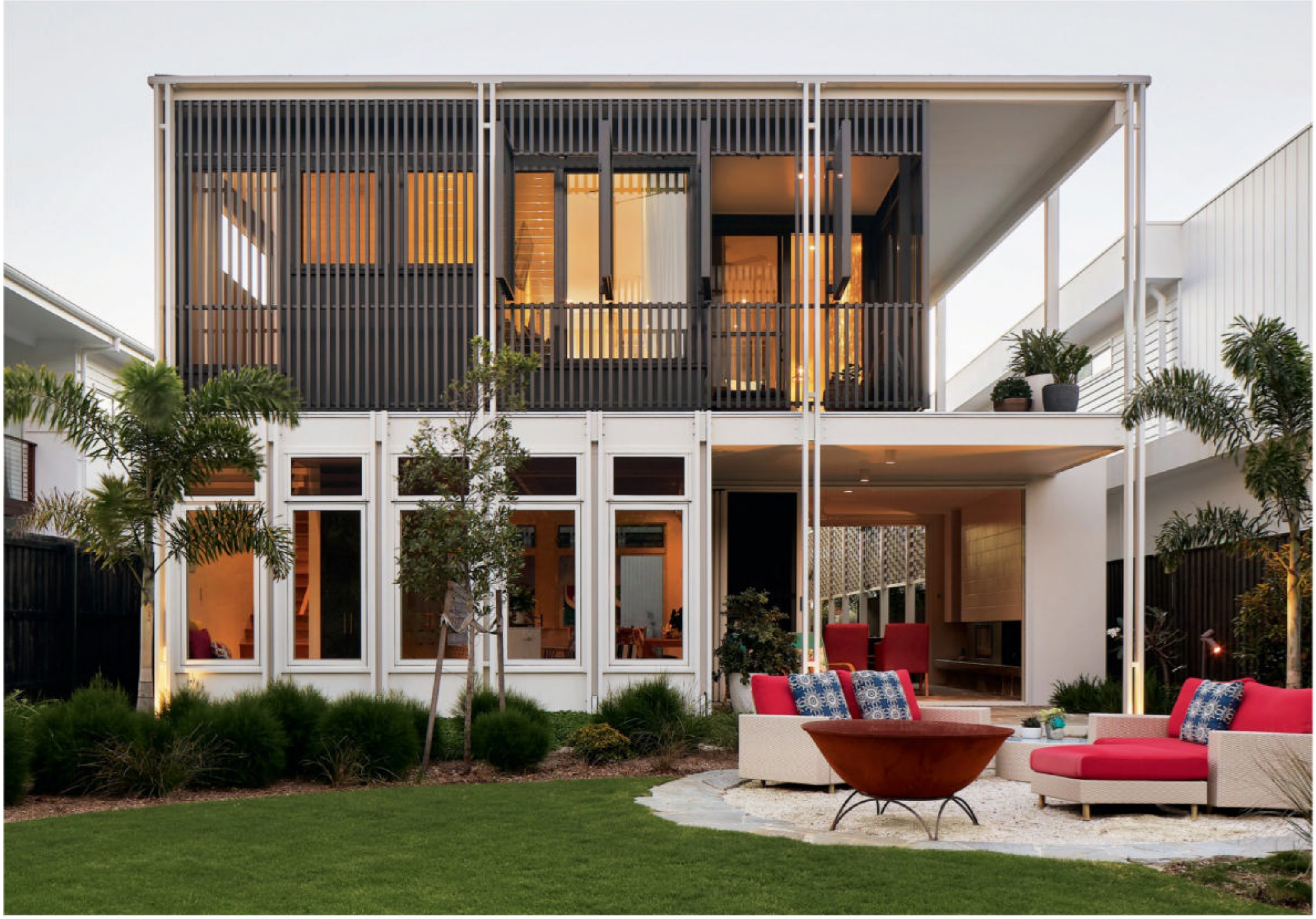
It was about creating different spaces, both inside and out, for year-round living whether the desire was to be exposed to or protected from the elements. Even the media room, by the pool, is more outside than in. "We pushed the clients on how they would live in the house – to live more externally than you would in a normal house," says Paul.

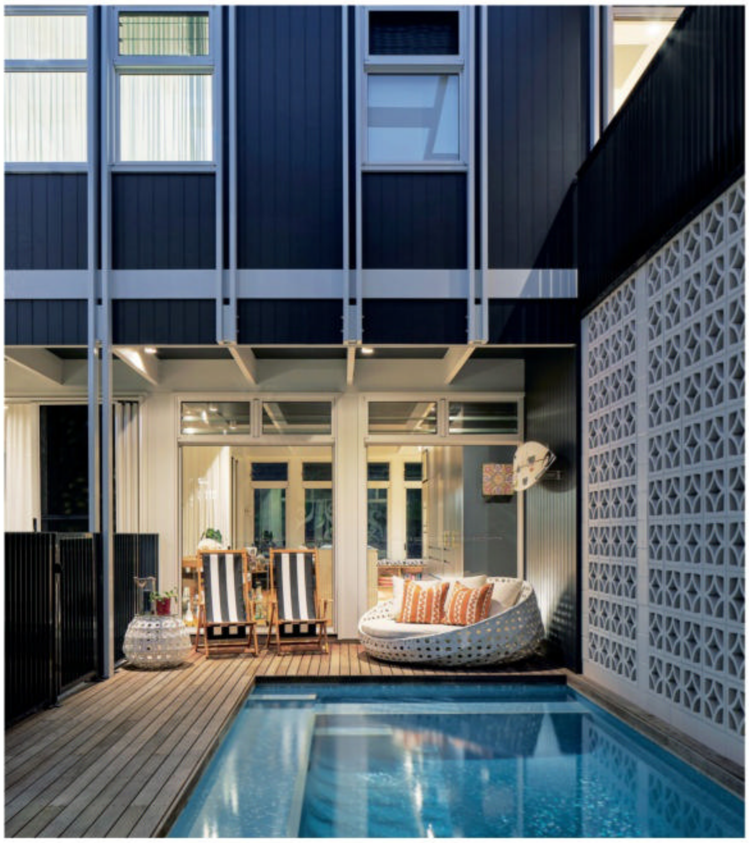
Openings via glass sliding doors, pivoting battened privacy screens and high louvre windows have multiple uses. They protect the house from low sun angles from the east and west; offer views either internally to their own private landscape or externally to the nearby bushland next to the ocean; provide security upstairs by allowing the owners to sleep with the doors open (onto a deck); and let the house breathe and gather in the ocean breezes.

Despite the area not coveting a traditional seaside history, Paul wanted to take inspiration from the modest but robust fibro beach shacks that were typical of many Australian coastal towns, particularly in the use of materials. "There is a language that people associate with their holidays – probably the older generation more – a reminiscence of going to the beach in a fibro shack that makes people happy," he explains.

Modern variations of fibre cement cladding, breezeblocks, crazy paving and timber battens were incorporated – albeit on a larger scale – and given a new twist. There's an all-encompassing geometrical-ness to the house with its many vertical timber battens and screens, rectangular shapes and squares within squares, which contrast with the irregular-shaped paving stones and the curved repeat-pattern of the breezeblocks.

The various many-sized and shaped openings, allow for a clever play of light and shade throughout the day – whether creating shadows or diffusing the light of the, often, harsh midday sun.





By bringing many of the external materials inside, the boundary between indoors and out was able to be blurred even more. "We dragged the outside finishes through the building and back outside again," says Paul of the continuation of the crazy stone paving and decking which extend into the internal living areas and even the bathroom walls. "So, when you're in the courtyard with the doors open, are you inside or are you outside?"

Paul and his team also accommodated the client's request for art objects, wallpaper and furniture they'd collected to be considered at the design stage, as well as the long concrete bench running the length of the living room that was commissioned from a friend. "The clients were fantastic ... They liked to work with ideas and were very open to things," he says.

When asked what he loves most about the home, Paul adds, "I keep thinking back to the main living space and external courtyard. In a suburb like this where everything is flat and most people build a box and look out of it, to drag the landscape into the centre of the site and build around it, is really nice. Your building becomes transparent from the by-path; you see through it to the landscaping. You feel like you're a part of it a bit more." ✦

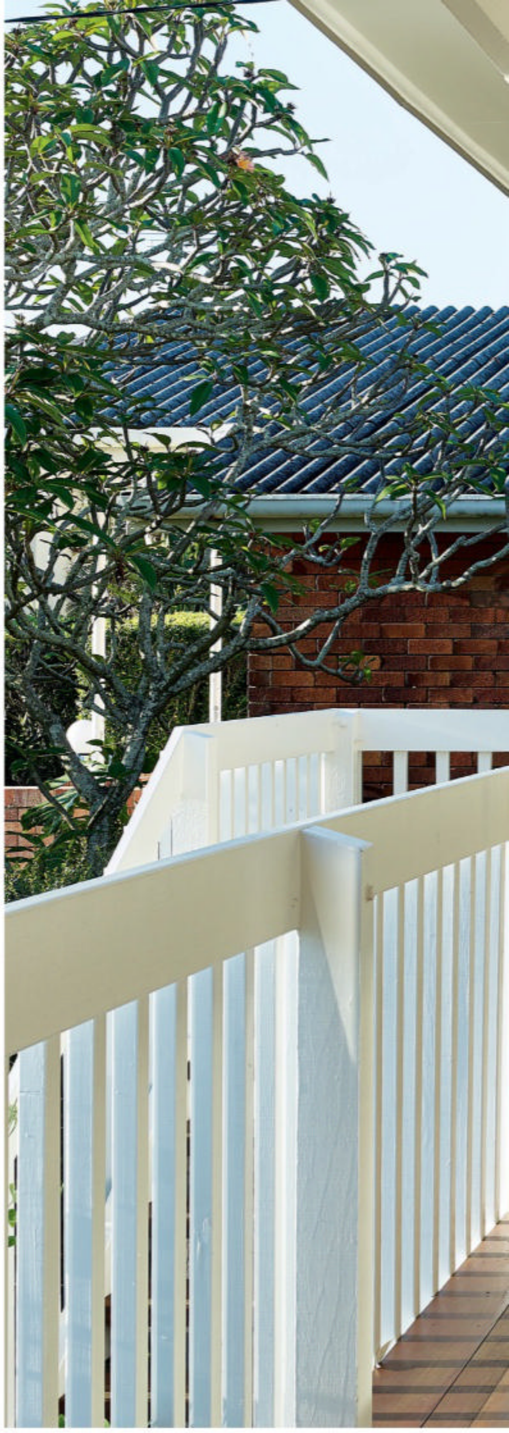
www.pua.com.au

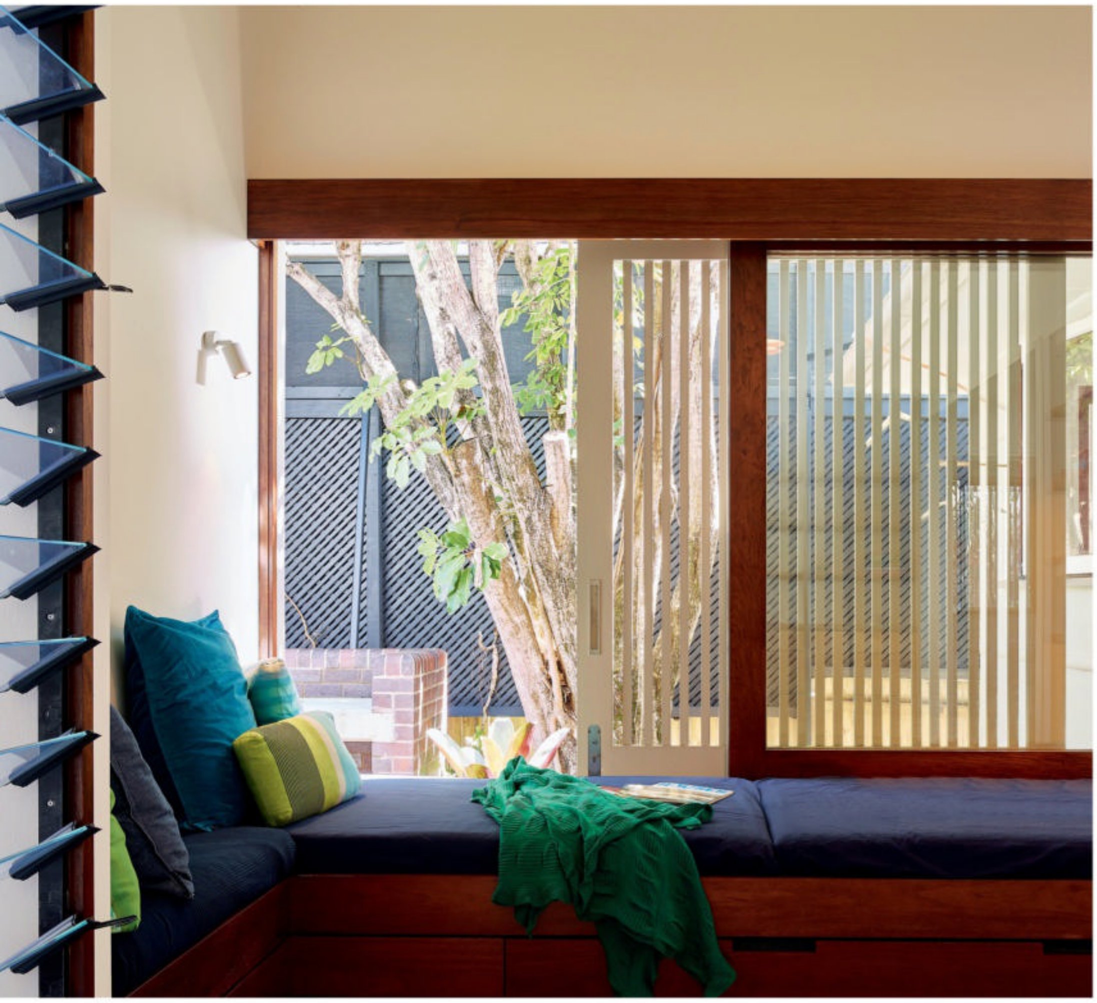
WICKHAM POINT house

Architectural eminence undergoes a contemporary reimagination on the dynamic headland of Wickham Point.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Scott Burrows

NO JUNK MAIL
33
NO PARKING
KEEP CLEAR
AT ALL TIMES



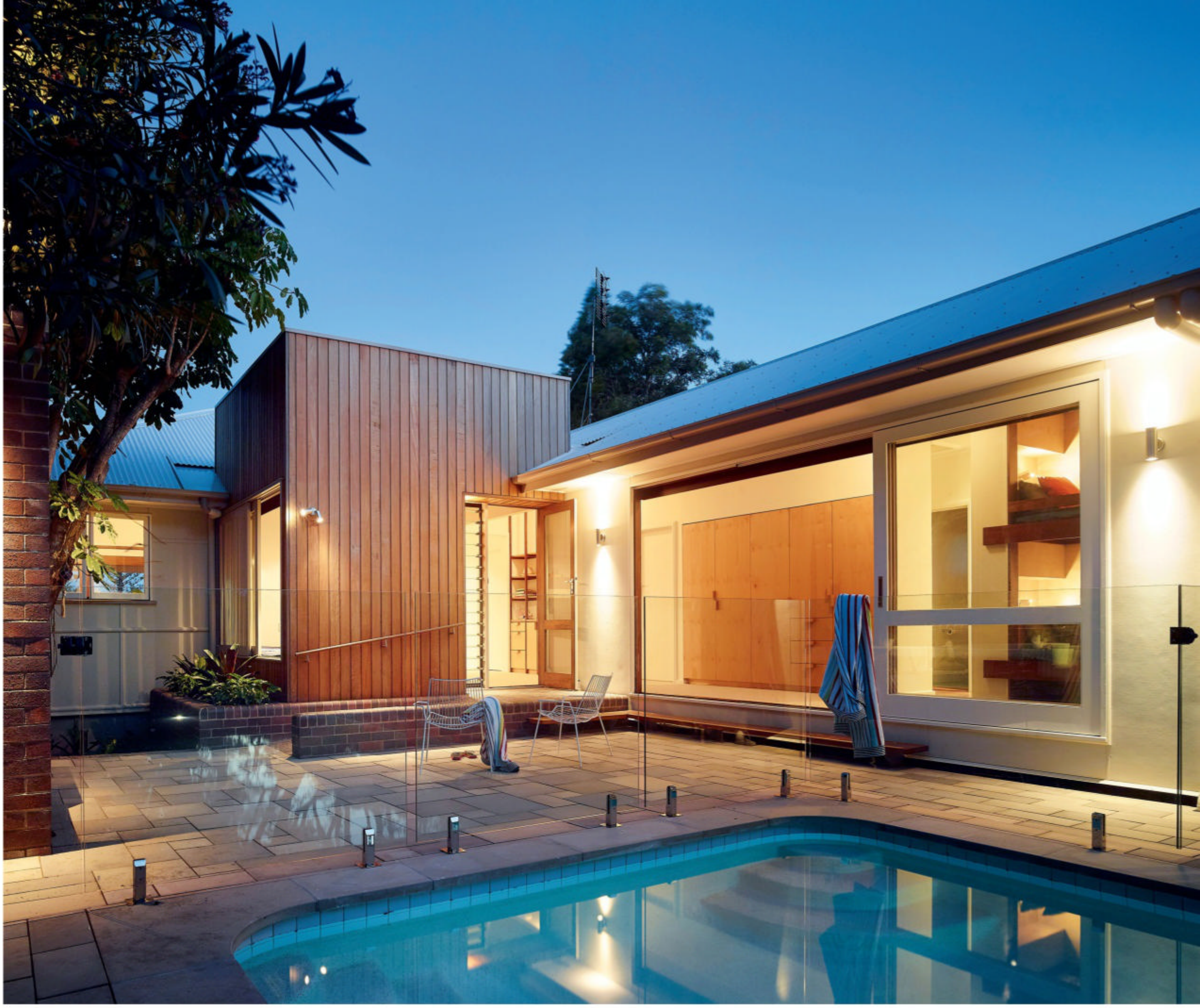


Wickham Point forms part of a headland in Caloundra, Queensland where there's an overlay of dynamic forces. Norfolk Pines line the coastal fringe and shipping channels criss-cross close to shore. It's a place of spiritual significance to the original indigenous people. This engagement with nature formed the backdrop of a renovation by Matt Kennedy of Arcke, tasked with reimagining a coastal home coined as Wickham Point House.

Built in the early 1900s and renovated by esteemed architect James Birrell in 1969, his contribution to Australian architecture both in government and private practice warranted honouring. Purchased by Matt's client in the late 1970s, he was asked to reinvigorate the home in 2015. He explains, "Working on a project where there had been a quality architect involved was very much about being respectful to his original design intent and taking cues from what he'd done. I saw our role as one of contemporary and sympathetic reinterpretation."

The brief was to reconfigure the house for multigenerational living in peak periods such as festive holidays. Flexibility was a key criterion. "Part of the brief was trying to find creative ways in which certain spaces could be used in alternate functions, depending on who was occupying the building," says Matt. Inheriting the architectural custodianship of Wickham Point House from a high calibre architect like James Birrell emphasised the existing integrity. The orientation to the north with living spaces engaging the northerly aspect as the house broadened, facilitated flow and a strong connection to the pool.

Matt's response to the design was twofold, to keep the footprint as minimal as possible and respect the original design in a holistic manner. He describes the concept research and analysis typical of his practice as - understanding the prevailing breezes in winter and summer and sun paths, identifying drainage considerations, interpreting circulation routes and addressing structural issues. He says that interpreting these parameters enables a response which is then distilled into a site-specific design. "I would have to say that the engagement with landscape and nature is central to this house, and in terms of passive design approach, trying to do more with less. In most of our projects we're trying to build less and just build better," he says.



Engaging with the Wickham Point site involved negotiating the front and rear elevations.

The original plans gave the design team guidance in matching the timber of old. A lack of supply changed the selection to local sustainable timber which was stained to match the original colour and grain. Plywood was added internally and timber cladding externally to increase the tactile material palette. The harsh marine environment impacted detail and design, forced to account for salt spray. Roof sheeting was upgraded to a higher level of corrosive resistance as were many of the fixtures.

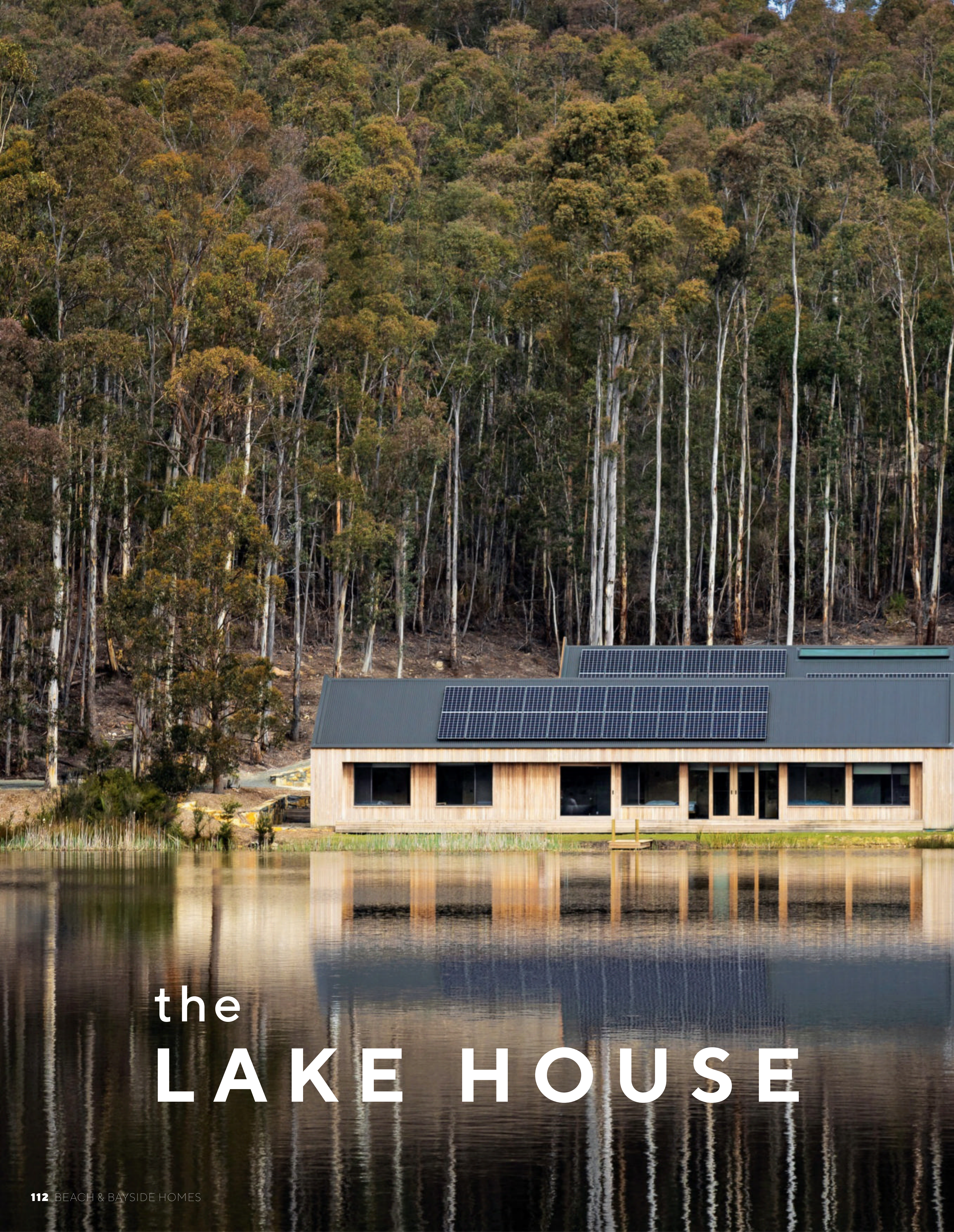
Wickham Point is zoned as high density. A multi-storied residential block occupies the northern elevation, so existing horticulture screening was amplified. An area under the house associated with the garage and services was reworked and the approach to the house was altered. A set of brick stairs and a giant planter box materially contrast the timber cladding. Ascending the stairs to the deck engages the front of the block with the aspect to the ocean. Behind that moving back through the house, the single level maintains a strong connection to the ground.

The articulation of the spaces has increased light, ventilation and flow in the home. Now when the blustery breeze picks up in the afternoon, the many retreats Matt has created provide refuge. Similarly, when the sun blasts, an increased permeability of the house draws heat though the length of the house rather than trapping it at the front. "It's a much nicer way to live, especially in the context of a coastal environment where you do want to have doors and windows thrown open and be engaged in the outdoors," he says.

Matt's favourite feature of the renovation is a sunroom with a series of daybeds that convert into a kids' sleeping haven, all with pull-out trundle beds beneath. He describes it as, "A moment of joy," that provides the ability to rest, read a book and take in the built-up garden beds. In the hallway he has created recessed bunk beds useful for daytime napping. They are also conducive to hiding out when the crowd has returned from the beach and the house is full. The house still has three bedrooms, but these flexible sleeping spaces almost amount to two additional bedrooms. These places of respite also act as spaces of engagement, relative to mood.

"Our architecture is research based and process driven and requires much consideration to achieve the right outcome. It's an ongoing process of design evolution and distillation rather than a specific lightbulb moment," he adds. ✦

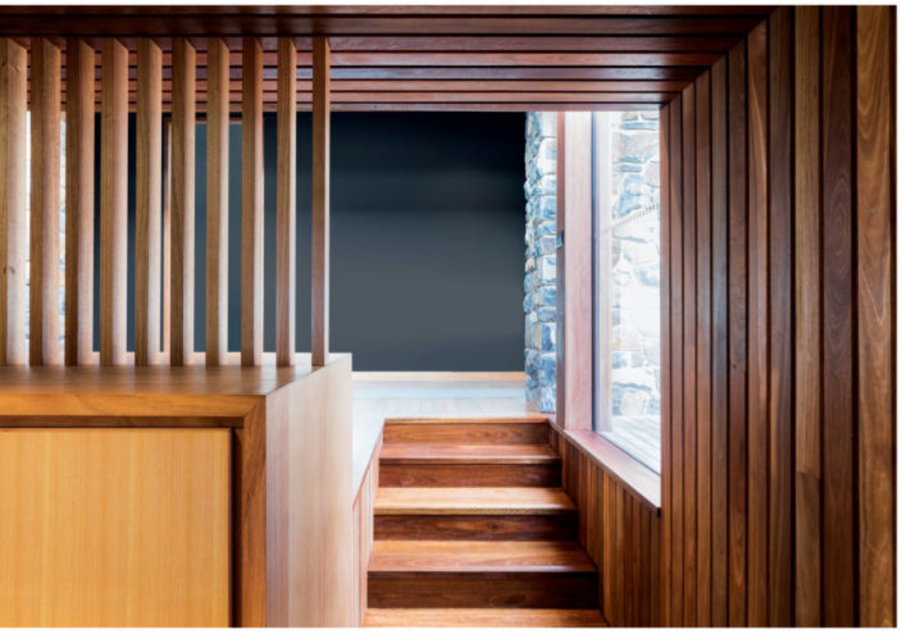
www.arcke.com.au



the
LAKE HOUSE

Design and artistry both recede a build into a secluded eucalyptus enclave and elevate it centre stage.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Peter Mathew

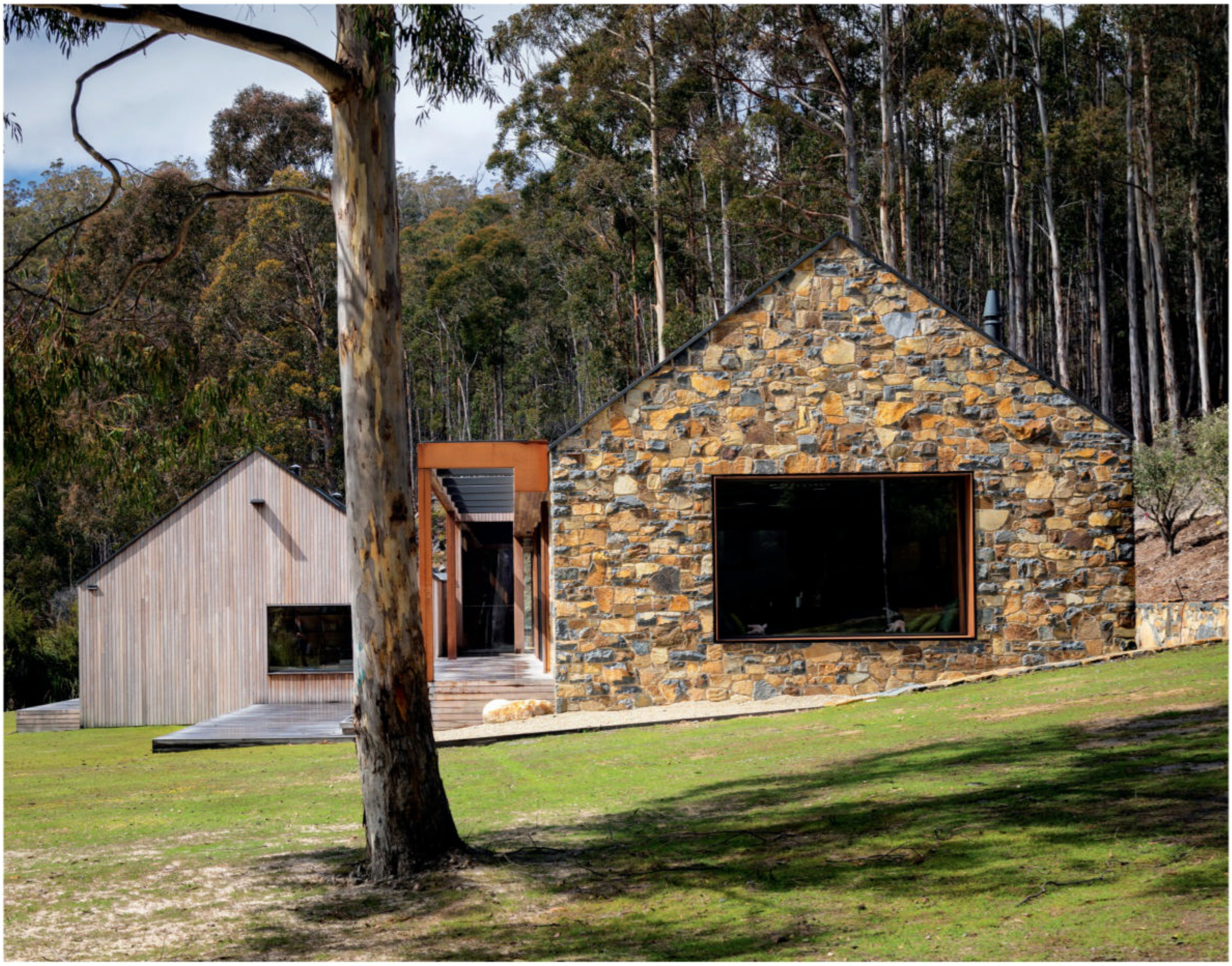


When Rosa Douramanis of Biotope Architecture and Interiors was briefed by a professional couple with a love of the Australian landscape, a eucalyptus amphitheatre sloping down to a lake was the dream site, with the water mimicking a stage. On the outskirts of Hobart, Tasmania, the aspect facing north to Mt Wellington reinforced the awe of the natural setting. Having lived mostly in high density urban apartments around the world, the prospect of a Lake House offered the clients an immersive change of pace and refreshing of souls. Secluded and private, Rosa was drawn to a natural glade on the lake's edge as the optimal positioning. The site required minimal clearing and the attraction of the "calming serenity" seemed an obvious choice.

The concept design was driven by the clients' desire for a sustainable house that created its own energy. Using passive solar principles to maximise the heat gain, the north facing site created significant opportunities. The clients required ample space to entertain family and friends so the idea of a long,

linear structure with the sun flooding every room, first came to Rosa's mind. However, the challenge in following the contours, was that one elongated, single corridor would eventuate, which wasn't ideal. She resolved this by splitting the build into two levels in a dramatic stepping down gesture. This staggered the corridor and more intimately connected the bedrooms and living spaces. To the south, the light is filtered by eucalypts hovering above artful skylights and to the west, an outdoor daybed provides glimpses of the lake and the bush beyond.

The material choice was largely informed by the rural setting which lent itself to farmhouse architecture, a favourite with the clients. From early discussions, it became clear that masonry was an important element so conversations with a stonemason happened at the outset. Together with the client he arrived at a bespoke solution that involved hand picking the more yellowy tones of Bluestone from a nearby quarry. The clients' affinity for the "greying off" of timber led to the selection of Spotted Gum, with a BAL 19 (Bushfire Attack Level) that satisfied bushfire requirements. The rusty aesthetic of Corten reminded Rosa of farm buildings, so she incorporated this for its capacity to blend with the environment as well as for low maintenance. For the supporting roof structure, gigantic timber trusses were fabricated offsite from recycled timber based on an onsite prototype designed collectively by engineer, architect and truss fabricator. In the reveal and steel framing cladding, Rosa worked with the steelworker to conceal the Corten fixings. Concrete flooring was polished to reflect the smooth, dark hues of



the lake on a still day. Floorboards were rubbed and polished with a natural nontoxic oil to achieve a matt finish.

The success of the build relied on skilled craftspeople coming together. Rosa had an existing relationship with the builder whose experience in commercial building allowed a good resolution of detailing required for this build. The initial design featured plywood lining the bedroom wings, so the combined internal and external timber structure mimicked a boat. However due to cost, this option was waived in favour of sustainable initiatives such as more photovoltaic panels, a larger battery as back-up and a geothermal heating system with ground loops in the lake supplying the energy. This equipment needed housing, so Rosa designed a dedicated storage shed as a continuation of the discrete slatted timber screening. Water tanks were adapted from the original fully submerged concrete to above ground polypropylene, which from an aesthetic perspective needed to be concealed. She also adapted to the clients' perspective on flyscreens. Not part of the original documentation, a change in plan meant Rosa had to contrive a retractable system to comply with the timber constraints and modify the wall thickness to accommodate their introduction.

The clients were involved in each stage of the process, dialogue was open and they were receptive to her suggestions. "Through our discussion process and through our meetings, and the way I presented things, I guess things evolved as to what they wanted," she says. Using 3D modelling all the way down to the finishes was an effective communication tool. The clients' trust in Rosa extended to the bespoke interior joinery, furnishings and fixtures, and she admits they were pleasantly surprised with the outcome. Their response upon completion in 2020 was, "Wow, we didn't think it was going to look like this!" The effect of front row seating to a play of natural light and eucalypts on the water, was beyond anything they had imagined. As was the accompanying chorus of birdsong.

The triumph of the Lake House was dependent on Rosa's collaborative and organisational skills in driving a team based on mutual respect. Listening and paying homage to the clients' tastes and ideas, informed an organic rather than linear model of execution. "I hope it's going to be a timeless piece of architecture because the stones will last forever," she adds. ✦

www.biotope.net.au

VENUS BAY bach

A simple and reductive intent is rewarded with an enduring personality and multiple good times.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Nic Granleese

While languishing on the beach at Venus Bay in Victoria during their summer holidays, a family of five from "New Zullund" met Antony Martin of MRTN Architects and his parallel family of five. The two families got chatting, as you do, and identified commonalities via a typical six degrees of separation conversation. Antony was also born in the land of puha and pohutukawa, but no, they weren't related. A friendship ensued and he applied his shared cultural tapestry to his familiarity with the local landscape to design a fit-for-purpose bach (kiwi speak for holiday house) for his new clients.

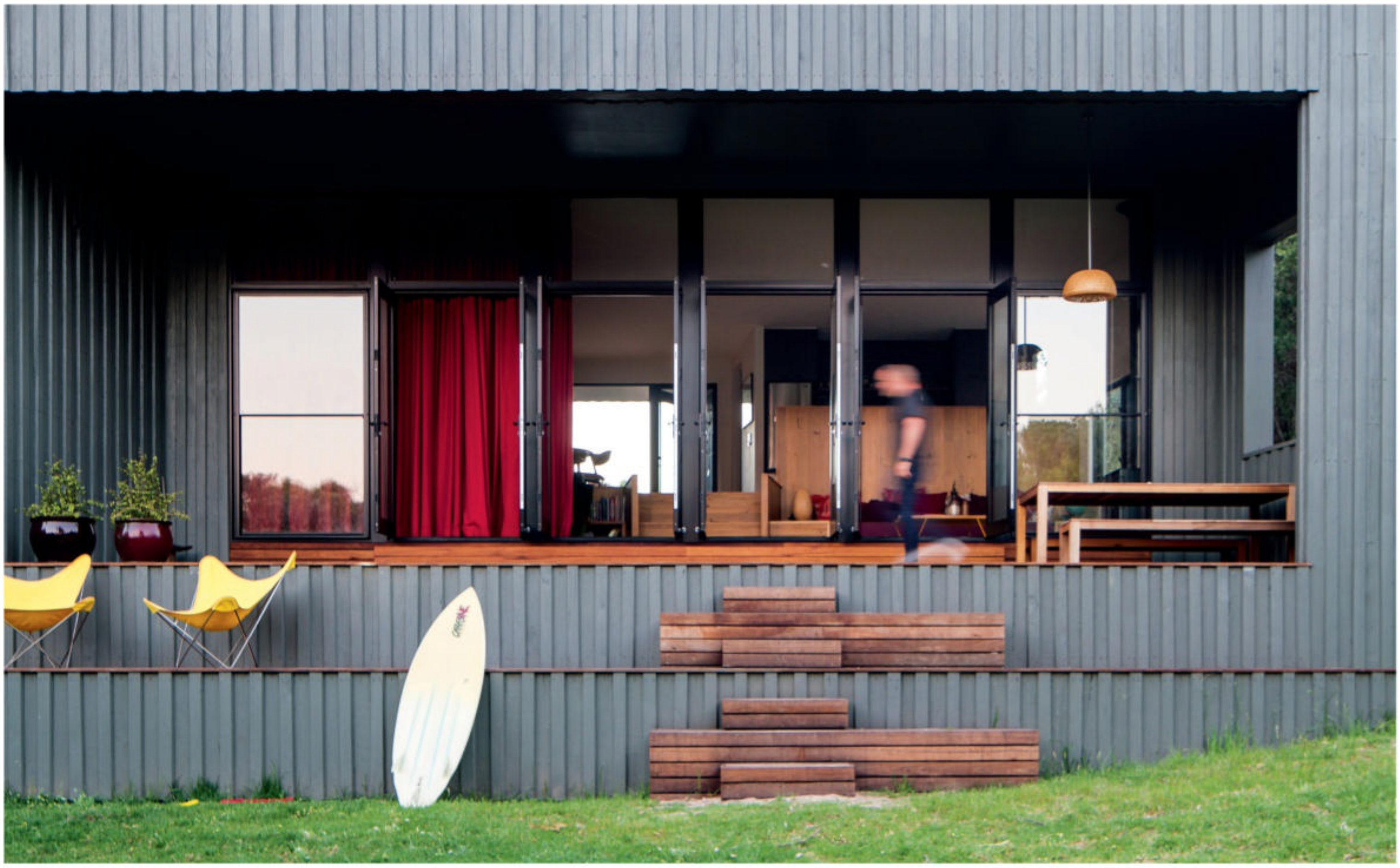
Venus Bay is a low-density, low-key community dotted with houses that are modest in personality, and the land purchased by the clients had been on the market for some time. It was a sloping block covered in tea tree at the end of a cul de sac, narrow to the road and flaring out to the sides. As Venus Bay is notoriously exposed to onshore south-westerly winds, enough for a wind farm, orientation was crucial. Antony drew on "form follows function" principles for the design and an awareness of the local conditions.

The brief was simple: four bedrooms, one bathroom, space to hang out with friends, and secluded pockets for solitude. All within a tight footprint of 120 square metres. Antony explains, "For a summer house, for a bach, that is actually all you need to get the positive impact and the social connections and all those things a beach house wants to be."

His concept relied on a few parameters, vision for the site when cleared of tea tree, and the negotiation of access. He positioned the front door facing southwest where the land tapers in, so the house could essentially turn its back to the wind. This created the capacity to open to the northeast to harness the morning sun, trapped by an outdoor deck of proscenium proportions. This siting also cleverly facilitated privacy from neighbours.

There were minor challenges with the build. The topography of the peninsula is naturally sand-based – forgiving and well-draining, but labour provision in the area is patchy. The contracted carpenter was an out-of-towner, so had a long commute each day. There was some difficulty moving scaffolding around the perimeter during construction as the height on the northeast aspect reaches six metres. As a bushfire prone area with a BAL (Bushfire Attack Level) of 29, the materials were informed by the bushfire management overlay. Only certain species of Australian hardwood timbers fulfil the criteria, and Silvertop ash was chosen for the cladding. To harmonise the build with the surrounding vegetation, the roughly sawn timber was stained a soft shade of Australian tea tree green.

The interior is humble. Timber flooring, built-in bunks and living room bench seat help maximise the compact space. Forest green stove tiles connect the kitchen to the outdoors and retro furniture salutes "the good old days", with practicality and a lack of pretension.



Completed in 2014, what has most impressed Antony is the durability of the design. As his family also owns a holiday home in Venus Bay, he has witnessed the bach mature and adapt to the changing environment. When the two families' stays overlap, they wander barefoot between houses (blame a kiwi obsession) and back and forth to the beach. Afternoons and many evenings are spent chilling on the enormous deck contemplating the vastness of the universe. Along with the quiet spaces, he has observed the way the house facilitates different social groupings and accommodates gatherings. For one memorable New Year's Eve party when he helped set up the band, there were twenty guests and ten people staying over in what is considered a small house. Antony says that it's one thing to fulfill a brief to allow this versatility to happen, "but it's quite another thing to actually see it in person and to see the success, and to know it's enduring".

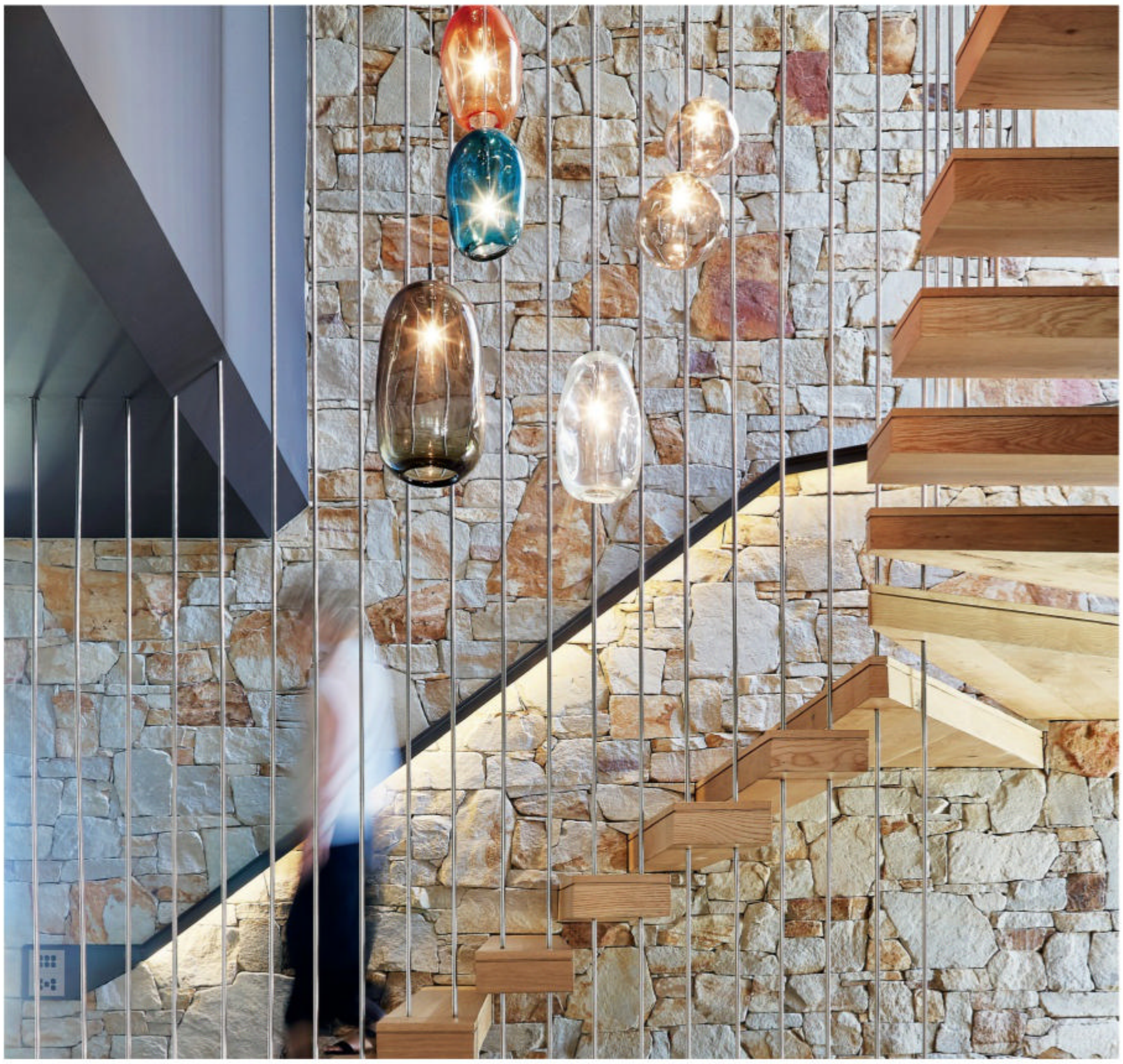
Antony admits the requisite skills for the success of Venus Bay bach were self-effacing. "We had to put aside quite a bit of design ego. It was a response to the brief that they needed, and the orientation of the site and the weather in the area. So, it had to be quite simple and reductive with a limited budget," he recalls. Years down the track he is content that the build lightly touches the landscape while also holding its presence firmly on the site. He describes the project as an affirming experience and has since completed more work for the client. The way the scale of the covered deck creates a cavernous and restorative space still evokes his admiration. "It's protective. You're outdoors, but you're not outdoors. You have a roof and sidewalls, but there's nothing between you and the sky," he says. ✦

www.mrtn.com.au

OCEAN residence

A sophisticated modular design fulfils a humble brief of sand and rock while balancing the harsh coastal climate.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Fraser Marsden



Surely, it's every architect's dream to be handed a brief with only two design elements. When Fiona Dunin from FMD Architects was approached by the client holding a jar filled with sand and a rock, her first thought was, "brilliant". A conceptual design for the site on the Great Ocean Road in Victoria had been prepared by Tony Hobba Architects, who passed the baton onto Fiona. The opportunity for her as a specialist in architectural detail and interiors, lay in blending the outdoor elements with the indoor, and she drew inspiration from the coastal landscape to inform her decision making.

The site faced due south and was occupied by a dilapidated house that was soon demolished. The outlook to the ocean was exposed to notoriously strong winds, so planning the orientation of the new build brought challenges. A steep slope on the northerly aspect of the site offered protection from the hot northerly winds typical in summer, so Fiona chose to bury the build into this natural recess to reduce exposure and scale. The rest of the site levelled out and offered easy access, so once the basement and retaining walls were set, it was easy to navigate around. The existing vegetation was sparse and in need of some landscaping love.

The home needed to accommodate a multigenerational family and their friends, but also be suitable for a smaller crowd in quieter times. What emerged was a sophisticated modular design with independent wings linked by a bridge. This form generated large, sheltered outdoor spaces, perfect for dodging the, at times, brutal climate. Flexible living and entertainment areas, including an indoor swimming pool, create a resort vibe with the option of shared or solo activities. An extended south facing balcony connects the home directly to the beach and the many moods of the ocean.

In her material choice, Fiona held tight to the brief and introduced sandstone as the "rock" element for cladding the home both inside and out. Her aim was to intertwine the connections between the landscape, the architecture, and the interiors and therefore she selected materials that coexist with nature. Her interior theme was based on proximity to the ocean. Bathrooms and bedrooms closest to the beach reflect the sand's gentle beige palette, while those set further back into the site reflect the deeper, red ochre of the surrounding bushland. As a design approach it's generous and individualised and sets up a luxury by distinction. Oak timber accentuates the natural tones both externally and internally adding textural warmth to the cooler stone elements. The most striking example of this is the impressive lobby where the gigantic mass of the double height stone wall is offset by an elegant timber staircase. This call-and-response equilibrium is repeated throughout. For the exterior, darker shades counterbalance the light sandstone, with the colour white eliminated for its brutal starkness. Fiona explains, "The darker tones allow it [the house] to sort of defer to the landscape, not protrude from the landscape."

The build was completed in 2015. Construction was a family-oriented approach courtesy of the client's involvement with the nominated builders. Although the interiors remained consistent from the outset, the exterior plans were fluid which suited Fiona's adaptable style. "I think it's a great way to work. Not everyone is OK with it, but I love that approach. You end up with a much in some ways,

improved design because you're prepared to negotiate with your ideals," she says.

Each screw, bolt, fixture and fitting were tested for corrosive tolerance and durability, before inclusion. The client was fully immersed in every aspect of these processes which, from Fiona's perspective, took their relationship to the next level. They shared an aesthetic sense and were aligned in their decisions. They shopped together for every single tile and every piece of furniture. When Fiona unpacked the client's many boxes containing objets d'art collected from around the globe, her involvement extended right down to the placement of the artistic accents. It was a pleasant alternative to clients who are completely hands-off.

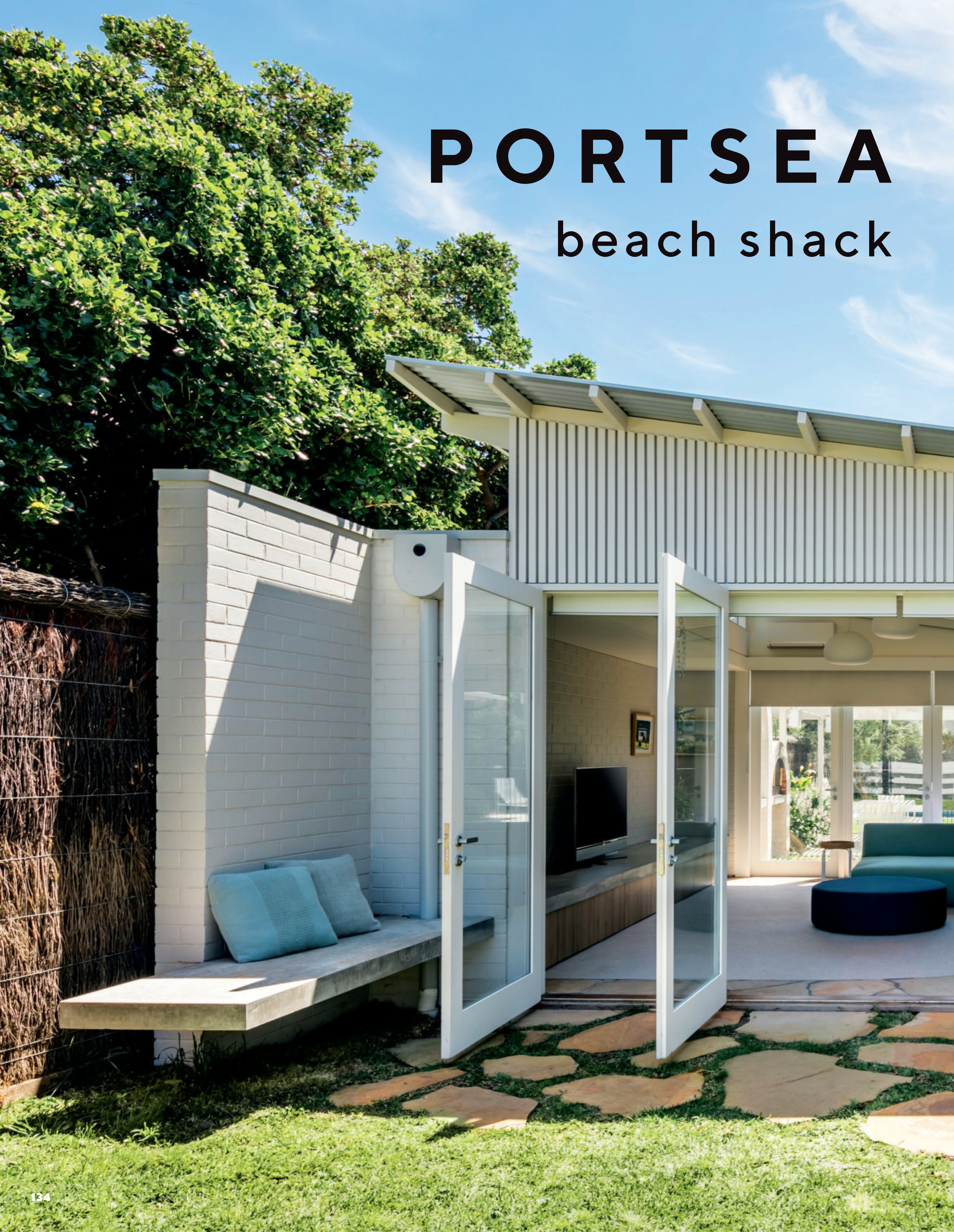
For the family, the outcome has brought them back to their roots. Ocean Residence has allowed them to become more relaxed versions of themselves. It offers them the chance to step away from the rush of corporate life into a simple beach existence that they can share and pass on through the generations. Admittedly it's a glamorous response and large scale, but it intentionally taps the calming and inviting coastal energy.

For Fiona the coastal build came at a timely point in her career and underscored a personal goal she still clings to. "We all strive for these complex urban lives and then all we want to do is go to the beach, have a swim and be with friends," she says. ✦

www.fmdarchitects.com.au

PORTSEA

beach shack



A lack of pretension, increased livability and a pizza oven were key drivers in a beach house revival.

WORDS Jane Riley **PHOTOGRAPHY** Michael Kai

As with most renovations, it's what you can't change that makes a project challenging. But what architect Berit Barton of Pleysier Perkins didn't expect to find when working on the revamp of a timber beach shack in Portsea on the Mornington Peninsula, was for the outdoor pizza oven to prove the biggest conundrum of all.

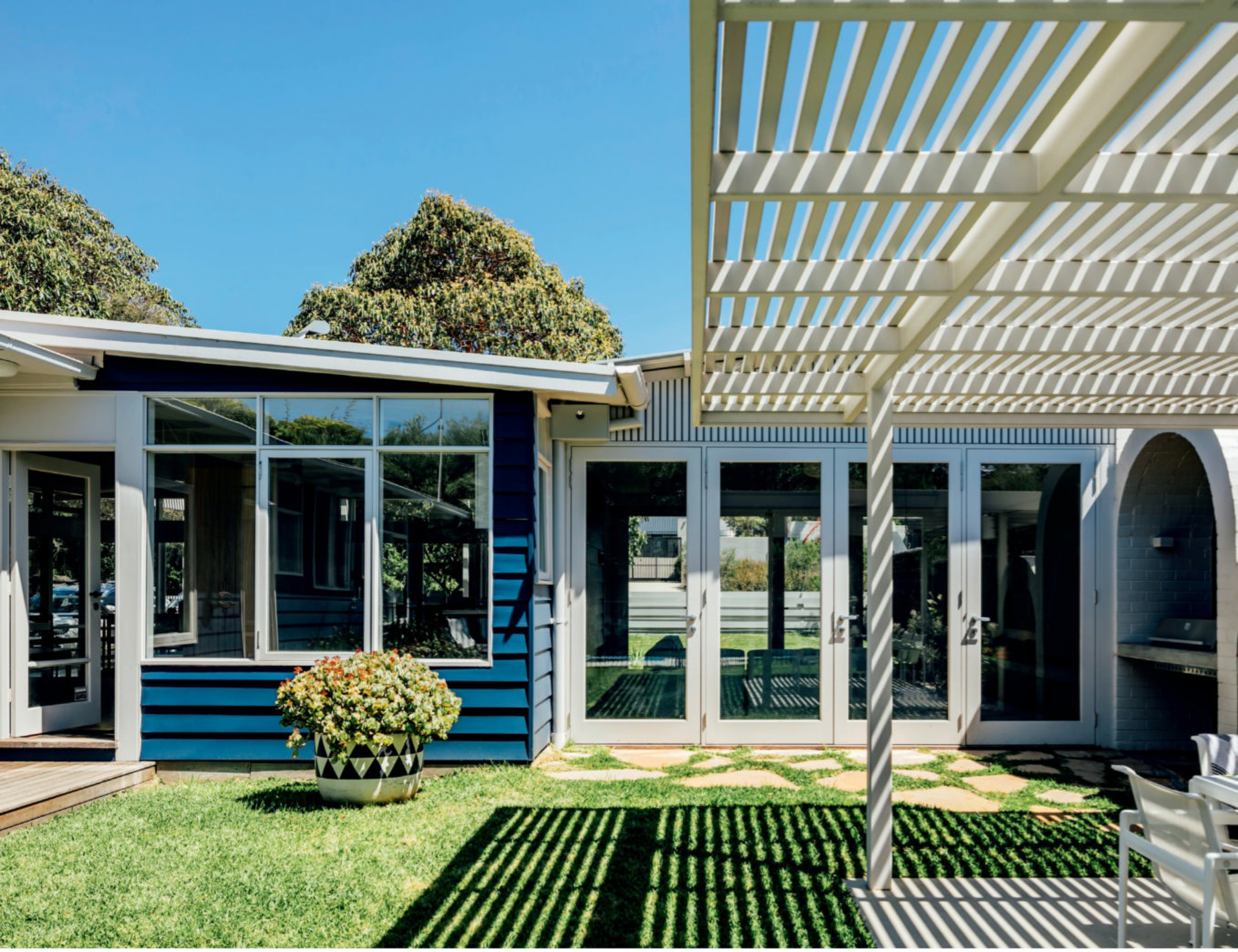
"I've never researched pizza ovens so much before. There was a lot of YouTubing," laughs Berit. "You can buy DIY kits but they didn't work with the design we wanted, which was to be in keeping with the architecture." But Berit's research paid off. The result: a custom-made oven using arching bricks inspired by a Mediterranean aesthetic, where every measurement and material used – from the length of the flue to the interior lining – was precisely and perfectly designed.

But before any pizzas could be enjoyed, the house itself needed some serious attention. Sitting modestly on a flat section on a back road near Shelley Beach as it has done since the 1960s, the four-bedroom cream beach house was tired, dated and "a bit flawed" says Berit. Having worked with the clients before, she was tasked with ameliorating the house without losing its character. "We didn't want to change it too much because it's not a pretentious beach house. It had to stay cute and casual."

The brief was to improve the existing building while retaining its mid-century features, such as the steel trussed ceiling beam, the central brick-painted fireplace and the white timber-framed windows. The owners desired a better connection with the back north-west facing garden; a more user-friendly kitchen; updated lighting, joinery and bathroom; plus an extra living space and master-bedroom ensuite.

Aspects of the property that had to be worked with rather than against included an existing patio situated, according to Berit "in a weird location" on the lawn in between the house and the pool; the neighbouring property sitting right on the western boundary, which was the only spot suitable for an extension; the ceiling panels they couldn't risk getting damaged because they no longer exist; and the Baltic pine floorboards whose shiny, yellowed epoxy finish they wanted to remove without ruining the timber.

Key to the renovation was respecting the home's heritage without disguising what was introduced. "We always take the approach that what's new should be readable," explains Berit. "We're not mimicking directly. We take a reference and give it a modern interpretation."



The new extension, designed like a simple old-fashioned lean-to, was added next to the kitchen, with its interior wall kept as navy-painted weatherboards "so you can still read the existing house". The roof is gently angled to complement the existing roof pitch and appears as if it's suspended between the brick boundary wall and the timber.

To function as a family living room, it was also to act like an outdoor room where both ends could be completely opened up via French doors. This solved the problem of a blocked access to the front garden and offered cross-ventilation. By extending the polished concrete bench that runs the full length of the far wall to the outside in the form of a seat and continuing the floor pavers out into the lawn, the indoor-outdoor boundaries were successfully blurred.

Reflecting the old in the new can be seen in the timber battens on the fascia of the extension which are a nod to the roof slats on the pergola, and in the brick of the boundary wall that's mirrored in the brick of the custom barbecue and pizza oven. But assures Berit, plasterboard doesn't feature anywhere.

To create a kitchen better suited to entertaining, it was designed to be enclosed rather than open plan with a bar that connected to the fireplace and a hidden fridge. To bring in more light and open up the house, a large corner kitchen window was introduced that opens to the back garden, and a strip of high windows in the new extension capture the western sun and offers a view of sky and trees, rather than of the neighbours. Says Berit, "There's dappled light and shadows everywhere."

"The beauty of this job was working with the builder whom the client knew. There's so much carpentry that the builder loved doing and a lot of lovely details without being pretentious or expensive."

Which brings us back to the barbecue-pizza oven nook off the kitchen, whose detailing extends to the oven's custom wooden handled door and the two bricks inside the barbecue turned at ninety degrees to house up-down lights.

Despite now singing with modernity and easy living, the shack is still character-filled and modest. All that's left to do is enjoy a laid-back beach life and pick off things to do – be it surfing, diving for seahorses down at the pier, walking in the nearby national park or perfecting your pizza making. ✦

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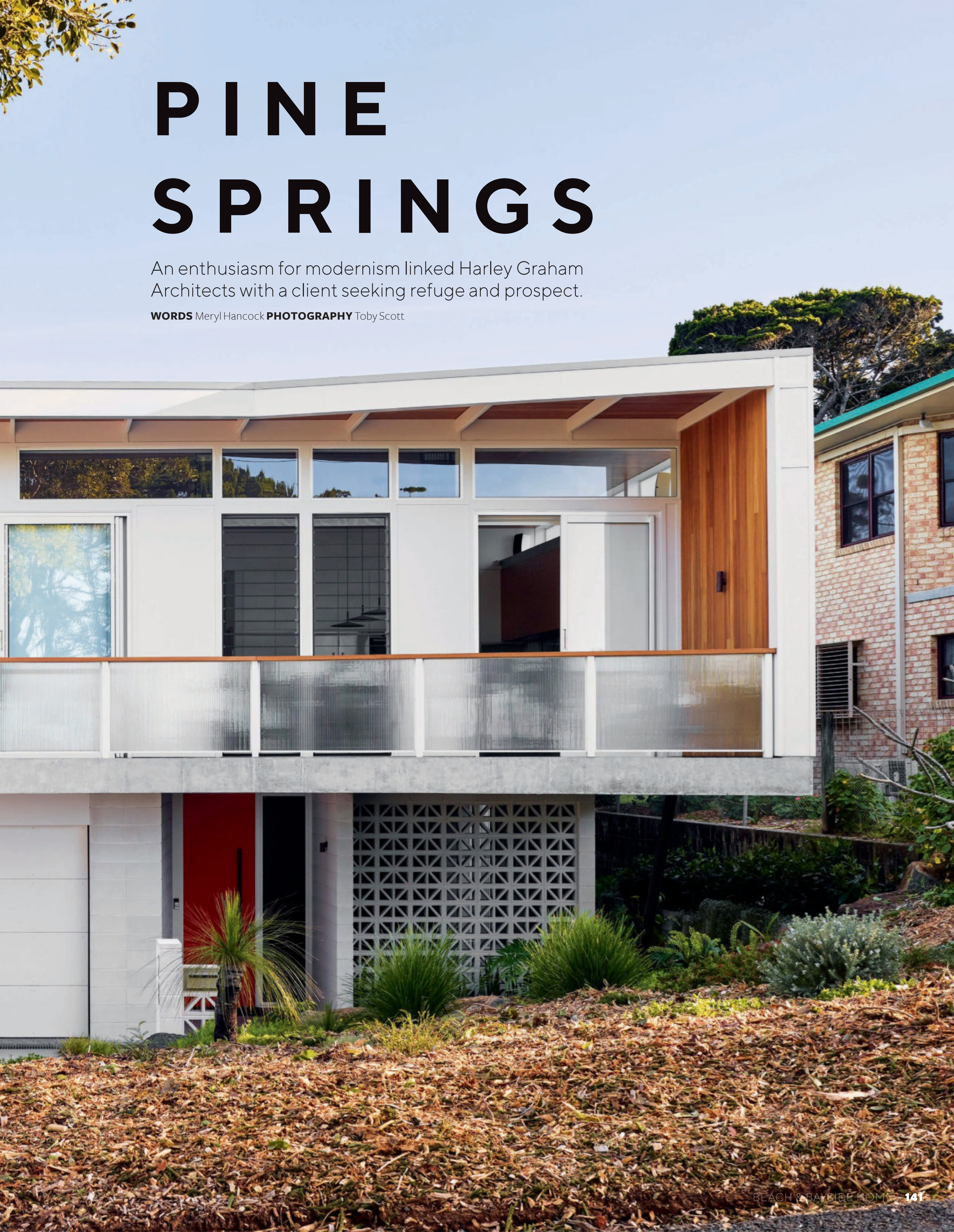
PINE SPRINGS

An enthusiasm for modernism linked Harley Graham Architects with a client seeking refuge and prospect.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Toby Scott



What have a cactus prick and a love of mid-century modern architecture got in common? They signify a first gig for architect PJ Deasy from Harley Graham Architects on a project in Ballina, New South Wales. Before starting a role at HGA, she was called in to meet a client with a parallel penchant for modernism. He delivered an exciting brief, but her mind was on her upcoming holiday to Modernism Week in Palm Springs, California - an annual immersion for cultists of mid-century art, design, fashion and architecture. On a house tour with her best design face on, she ran into a cactus. It stuck to her head. Bizarrely, her Ballina client and fellow modernist enthusiast, was behind her. "He was mortified looking at me," she recalls, but his profession as a hairdresser was beneficial in helping her detach the spiky succulent.

Prior to the cactus foray, the client had approached HGA with a floating box concept as a contemporary take on modernism. He had purchased a site in Pine Avenue and for fun renamed it 'Pine Springs' to reference his modernist intent. Flamboyant designs were exchanged, and conversations reflected the contextual relationship to East Ballina. Seeking a sanctuary, his brief outlined a gallery space for an eclectic art collection, a garden space, a private retreat, and a generous kitchen for entertaining. Using "Architecture 101 principles", PJ applied concepts of prospect and refuge to the sloping site. "Pine Springs is in essence sort of a refuge. But it's perched quite high on a hill and enables prospect over a river inlet and further beyond the beach. It's a really important concept for designing," she explains. Her contrasting responses were to maximise ocean glimpses to the southeast and to navigate privacy in the suburban setting.

Challenges came with negating the levels of the site. It was a steep block with an eight-meter fall from the top northeast corner to the bottom southwest. Next door to the north was a two-story dwelling and next door to that, a water tower that substantially overlooked Pine Springs. The client wanted to engage the tree canopy at the back to create a private oasis, and preliminary sketches were "U" shaped surrounding a pool. This shape worked for the ground level, but the fall constrained a "U" for the second level, and it was revised to an "L" to avoid breaching the height plane. The rear BAL (Bushfire Attack

Level) rating pushed the building envelope forward for safety, and vehicle access also dictated. "Basically, cars in a really unsexy kind of way drive that whole level of foundation. We set the bottom level to where we can get cars in and work from there," says PJ.

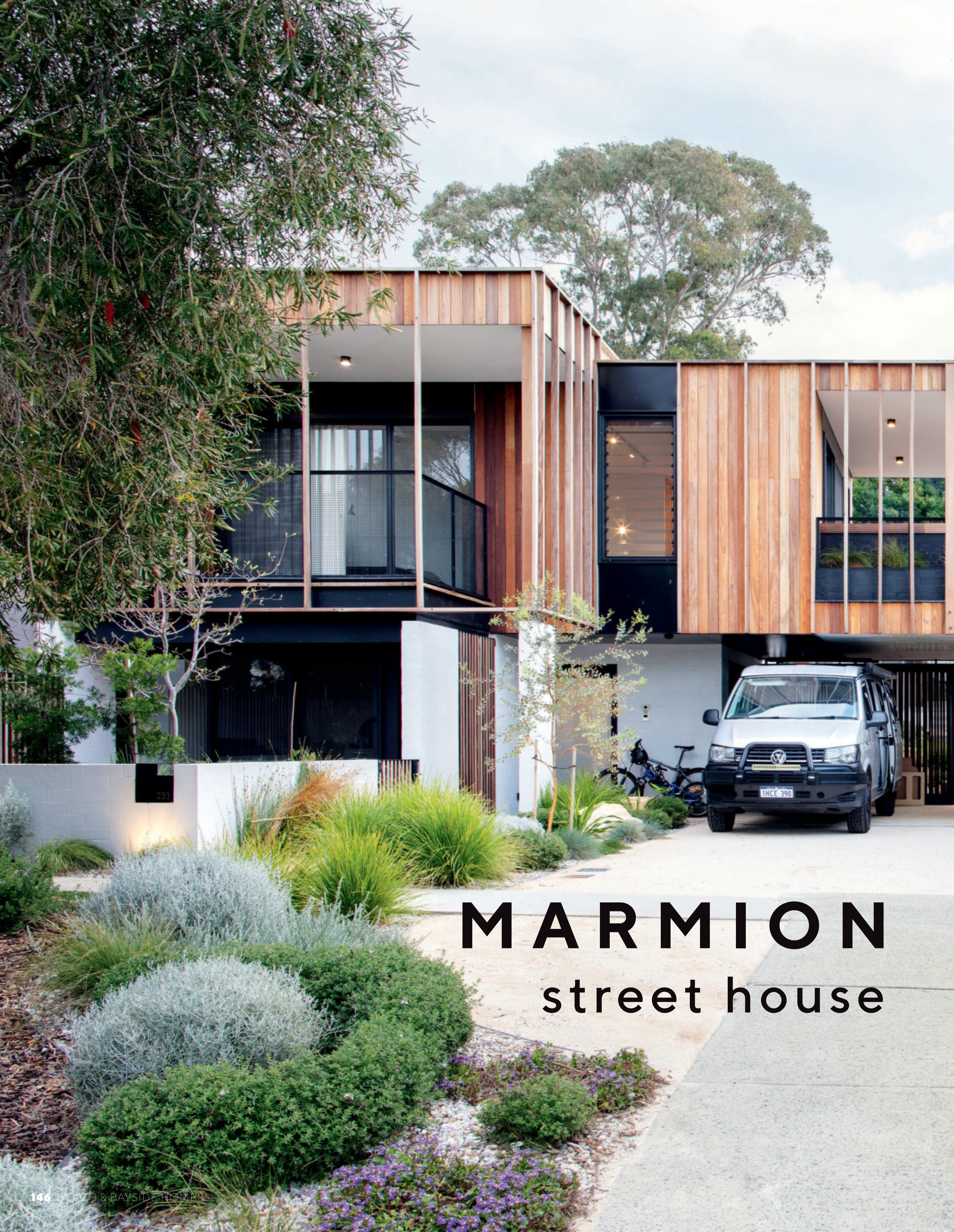
The exterior materials had to be low maintenance to protect the oasis from intrusive paintbrushes, scaffolding or work of any sort. The client selected breeze blocks as a mid-century tribute to the coastal climate. The ground level was anchored by white masonry and above that, fibre sheet cement was chosen as an ode to board and batten. These finished materials simultaneously spoke the local lingo and gave the floating box its 'Pine Springs' persona.

Internally, the focus was on creating privacy while encouraging solar access, "We worked very carefully with a number of balustrade designs and ended up using this beautiful, fluted glass," she marvels. There was an ease of two-way negotiation. The Mondrian colour pops were the client's idea, the artwork doubling as a wardrobe. Cautious about appropriating out of context, PJ had suggested pastel colours as an option. "We kept going back to the red, the blue and the yellow and he said, 'PJ – we're just not pastel people!' After seeing all his furniture, I understand it," she says. The interior walls were kept intentionally white, as a backdrop for the client's many curios and collectables. Blackbutt timber was added in the ceiling and joinery to offer warmth to the internal spaces. Inspired by elaborate Italian terrazzo flooring, the floor slabs were decorated with exposed aggregate - selected and helped spread by the client.

These concrete slabs assist in passive solar gain driving the sustainable initiatives of Pine Springs. A large water tank embedded at the back of the site is also useful for garden irrigation, and a solar system and inverter generate energy for the home. Completed in 2019, future plans include an electric car and battery storage.

The success for HGA is the "beautiful feedback" from the client who says living there is "like a dream". The fluidity between indoor and outdoor spaces is true to Palm Springs' architecture. The outdoor sanctuary is a serene, stunning space and a favourite feature. Landscaped by the client, PJ agrees he's done a wonderful job in creating a sensory experience. There's no cactus. "We were just on the same level and on the same wavelength," she adds. ✦

www.harleygraham.com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MARMION
street house

On the last sand dune before the ocean, Norfolk pines, crunchy quartz and salty air allude to a holiday vibe.

WORDS Jane Riley
PHOTOGRAPHY Bo Wong

A desire to recreate childhood memories of clambering up and over sand dunes on your way to the beach while embracing the suburb's renowned wide street verges is what drew the owners to the original Marmion Street house in Cottesloe, Perth, Western Australia. It's these two ideas which informed the design and material choice for the new house they wished to build.

"People are drawn to something bigger than themselves and the ocean offers that," says architect Philip Stejskal of Philip Stejskal Architecture. "The owners wanted to create a home that was like a holiday house. As you walk from the street across the verge up the slope of the site, it's as if you're meandering your way up a sand dune to the beach."

Situated on the leeward side of the last dune before you reach the sea, the site has no coastal views, but the ocean is ever-present. From the minute you arrive, you can hear it, smell it, and taste the salt on your lips. It's like the beach is quietly luring you into the property and out the other side.

To this end, explains Philip, "We worked closely with the landscape architect [Annghi Tran of Landscape Architecture Studio] on the material for the driveway. It's compacted quartz fines, so you can feel it under your feet and hear it crunching as you walk on it."

Annghi also created a wandering path with coastal dune-like vegetation leading up to the courtyard and limestone steps. It's at the carport where the design begins to blur the boundaries of what's private and public. "The idea was that the house was visibly permeable in both directions," says Philip.

Not only was the carport designed to not look like a carport, but the open terrace above encourages connection and interaction with the local community at street level on one side, and the garden and distant ocean on the other. In addition, from both the living room and outdoor fire pit, you can look down the slope to the street. And yet, if desired, the view can be closed off via a sliding screen at the end of the carport.

"A lot of houses in the suburbs turn their back on the street – it's all about the private domain. It's really great how these clients wanted to do something different."

Other elements which formed the brief for the three-bedroom, two-living home were a granny flat for visiting overseas relatives, an improvement of the site's northern aspect, and passive solar design to avoid having air conditioning.

In order to minimise the need for heating and cooling, the building is largely made from brick. The walls are reverse brick veneer, with some exposed brick on the ground floor. The front of the house features spotted gum cladding and battens which have been oiled and allowed to weather and grey off, and at the back is fibre cement cladding, painted white for a coastal feel. Inside features lime-washed hoop pine ply and polished concrete floors with hydronic underfloor heating. All the finishes were chosen for their durability and unfussiness, and to evoke the feel of a beach shack.

"There's a bit of plushness from the marble used for the kitchen benchtop and in the bathrooms," says Philip. "Aside from that the materials are very down to earth."

To make the most of the site's northerly aspect, the design encourages the winter sun to come in and warm up the concrete floor slab, while the overhangs help keep the summer sun out. A split-level floor plan allowed

for a seamless integration into the natural landscape with the addition of a central garden onto which all the living spaces connect. Even the ground-floor granny flat at the front has its own garden. A few of the larger trees at the back of the property were kept, as was an original and iconic Norfolk pine at the front. An existing laneway leading to the beach is accessed via a gate at the south-west corner.

Says Philip, the whole process was "a genuine collaboration" with the client. The kitchen design was informed by the owner's desire for both a wet and dry kitchen, where the former is situated behind open shelving and the latter is front of house featuring a marble benchtop and dining area. They were also keen for the children's bedrooms to be similar to sleeping pods, to allow more space for a larger living and study area next door.

The beauty of Marmion Street House lies in its understated casualness and ability to sit comfortably within its environment.

"It's weathered more since the images were taken," adds Philip. "It's greyer and sits even better in the street now. When you drive past, it's like a moment of pause. It calls for your attention but in a quiet way." ✦

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TRADE WINDS

A mid-century classic receives a sympathetic makeover from Lorne's unofficial town architect.

WORDS Meryl Hancock **PHOTOGRAPHY** Trent Perrett

On his many quests for the perfect set of waves along the Great Ocean Road close to Lorne, Victoria, architect Josh Crosbie's gaze was always drawn to a long, slender silhouette perched on the hill above the rugged coastline. Distinctive from the taller, boxier shaped houses surrounding it, he found the clean straight lines and strong horizontals of the mid-century home known as Trade Winds, utterly alluring. "I'd always ogled at it and regarded it as my favourite house on the whole of the surf coast even though I'd never been lucky enough to go inside it," he explains.

The elegant profile with its striking, unbroken mullions extending the length of the glass façade, set up a repetitious language with every second frame topped by a small awning window for airflow. It was this sublime detailing that Josh recognised on a real estate website under local listings, in early 2020. He almost fell off his chair.

As Lorne's unofficial town architect, regular enquiries from prospective purchasers on the limitations of developing properties in the bushfire-risky, planning-constrained coastal strip, heightened the challenges a home like Trade Winds could present. The layout was not functional for Josh's family, there was no storage, no outdoor play spaces for his active boys, and no garage or carport.

The tricky passive solar gain due to the southerly orientation and the steep northerly hillside blocking a lot of winter sun, was offset by the

stunning aspect towards Lorne pier on the other side of Louttit Bay. With the cool temperate climate of the Otway rainforest behind and the wild ocean in front, Josh was attuned to the raw energies converging on the doorstep. Backed also by a love of renovating, he acted fast.

"I happened to be going to Japan for an admittedly gnarly, back country snow-boarding trip and that was only a couple of days later, so I was speaking to banks, the conveyances, the lawyers and the real estate agents and had so many balls in the air," he recalls. The upshot was he managed to pull everything together, sell his existing home and obtain preliminary approval for the purchase of Trade Winds within the space of two weeks, all remotely. He admits to identifying a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and was happy to take a leap of faith.

Unearthing the history proved fascinating. Although he bought from the Lorne family who built the house in 1965, the builder is named but the designer and original plans remain a mystery. "I knew it was exclusive and I'm not aware of any other mid-century masterpiece houses that are on the ocean, certainly not in Victoria", he says. It was clear that renovating a rare example of Australian coastal architecture required respect and integrity.

He engaged local tradespeople including Great Ocean Road Builders, familiar with the intricacies of the coastline, to assist with a site-specific response. It was necessary to cut in an access track to get machinery onto the property and to open up the landscape. Josh explains, "It's difficult to get materials down here, it's difficult to get rid of waste, soil, the weather can be difficult, and access can be

shocking. A lot of our projects require a patient tradesperson, a patient builder and things take a bit longer to build down here."

Tradewinds is in fact two dwellings, the main house with the slender façade visible from the beach features a sprawling open kitchen and dining room, and two bedrooms. Plush white carpet lays down a 1960s James Bond theme. A separate, self-contained backhouse at the end of the driveway has a further two bedrooms, a study, kitchen, dining and living room and a huge deck, ideal for the pleasures of hosting friends and family.

Josh worked in with the many aspects he considered sacred, the interior exposed rafters that turn down evenly into the window frames, the existing façade with its beautiful mullions, and the kitchen with original hardwood joinery. He added a long sub-floor not visible from the outside, with a studio, a terrazzo bathroom and an insulated "mancave" for tools and toys including sea kayaks and collectable European pushbikes.

By reconfiguring the internal architecture, the view from the master bedroom now captures the sunrise and peers back to the winking lighthouse at Aireys. Existing cupboard fronts were recycled, and new closes, handles and hinges added. Josh designed wardrobes throughout in a lighter shade of hardwood veneer. An outdoor bath was plumbed in, the house was repainted black, and the beloved window frames alone took six weeks to restore, all with the family in situ. "It's still surreal when you walk in the door. Looking down at the ocean, you see all the moods, the weather patterns, mother whales and calves. It's like we're viewing mother nature through a portal," he adds. ✦

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